

Inclusion of Internally Displaced Children in Colombian Public Schools

A Children's Voice perspective

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Abstract

In many years a devastating forced displacement has taken place in Colombia because of internal conflicts. As a consequence of this violence, the educational system face challenges in fulfilling the right to education. Since most of the displaced persons take refuge in urban areas, the pressure on the public educational system is immense. This qualitative study aimed to illuminate how internally displaced children in the country are included in the public educational system after enrolment, and two schools in Bogotá were chosen as cases; in the districts of Suba and Usme respectively.

One of the main objectives was to investigate challenges with the internally displaced children's everyday lives as students, and to map reinforcing factors to understand better what make them continue the schooling process. The theoretical frameworks by Goffman (1963) and Link and Phelan (2001) were used to explain stigmatization among the IDPs at school, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of social systems (1979) was applied to explain processes of social inclusion and adaptation.

Methodologically, open-ended interviews were carried out with 15 former internally displaced children. In addition, a document analysis of central educational policy documents by the Ministry of Education was applied to provide a macro-systemic perspective in order to triangulate the data.

The data suggest that the period right after enrolment was most challenging in terms of discrimination and exclusion. At the school in Suba where the IDPs made up a minority of the total student population, various forms of discrimination were common. On the other hand, the IDPs at the school in Usme, where they formed up the majority of all the students, less discrimination were experienced. The immediate family, and especially the mother, was considered of high importance to the IDPs' adaptation and maintenance in the educational system. The latter finding was coherent between the two cases.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to all children in the world who suffer from structural deception.

“Keep on forward and use your strength to achieve the important things in the life. The most important you can get is education. Be brave and move on, because a new future awaits us.”

(Macy, 14 years, Colombia)

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Abbreviations

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
HR	Human Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
MEN	Ministerio de Educación Nacional
NCPC	Nueva Constitución Política de Colombia
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PND	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo
PNDE	Plan Nacional Decenal de Educación
RE	Revolución Educativa
RUPD	Registro Único de Población Desplazada
SINEB	Sistema Nacional de Información Educación Básica
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cooperation Organization
WB	World Bank

Illustrations

Figure 1 Political map of Colombia with the largest displacement tendencies



Source: IDMC (2008)

Figure 2 Bogotá and its districts



Source: Secretaría de Gobierno de Bogotá D.C (2007)

1 Introduction

Since the outbreak of the civil war in 1948 in Colombia, Latin America's largest and oldest guerrilla war has affected a huge number of families and individuals throughout Colombia. Also referred to as *The Violence*, the armed conflict has led to the forced displacement of 4.9 million people within the country (IDMC, 2010), which makes up the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDP) per population in the world. The victims suffer from severe discrimination, deprivation, and other kinds of challenges (OCHA, 1998), and there are many reported abuses by irregular armed groups, including guerrillas and different paramilitary groups (Human Rights Watch, 2010). As a consequence of this violence, the right to education as a public social good is not adequately met for those who are forced into displacement. Since most of the displaced persons take refuge in urban areas (NRC, 2010), the pressure on the public educational system is big. While some of the internally displaced children manage to enrol in the public educational system where they arrive, fewer children continue the educational process. Those who continue, however, make up the case of this study; namely the inclusion process of the students who are within the public educational system as former displaced children in the public Colombian educational system.

Essentially, the conflict has been enacted between the two leftist guerrilla groups the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). The last years violent activities have expanded to include more guerrilla groups as well, culminating to be "an atomised, multi-polar war among guerrillas, rightwing paramilitaries, making Colombia to some extent a weak and fragmented state in recent years" (Chernick 2003: 13). In 2009, 27.1 million people were displaced from their homes worldwide (IDMC, 2010), increasing from 21.3 million people in 1999. The international agreement of universal education for all (EFA) is difficult to realize because of structural poverty and inequalities. For instance, many IDPs lack formal documentation so they can be registered into the educational system, or they face the inability to pay the school fees (Machel, 1996). In terms of continuation of the education, early age pregnancy and boys' negative perceptions that public education is superfluous are considered some of the obstacles in-school (Personal communication with Rojas, 2009). Moreover, malnutrition, psycho-social trauma, and cognitive disorders are also important factors (Mooney & French, 2004).

1.1 Rationale of the study

The international community has a responsibility to challenge governments in their efforts related to the growing numbers of IDPs (Deng, 2001). In spite of such a duty, internal refugees remain being a neglected group on the international research agenda, Freirns argues (2009). One of the main problems is that refugees seldom are included as participants in research (Trimble & Fisher, 2006). Such exclusion may fail to spot crucial realities of the social circumstances they are a part of. Research on displacement issues in Colombia is not an exception. One of the reasons why there has been little done in the way of research on this group in Colombia can be the government's under-reporting¹ of displacement as well as the fact that the de facto forced displacement in Colombia is considered to be highly politically sensitive (NRC 2010: 20). Another aspect of doing research with IDPs is the concern of researching phenomena where social and cultural identities are challenged; a situation which emerge when IDPs move from rural areas of Colombia into the large cities. Crossley and Watson point out that such issues should get more focus than they have today (2003). In the following sub-section, the study's rationale is outlined.

1.1.1 A call for policy change

Colombian educational policies are heavily influenced by a neoliberal² philosophy of governance (Álvarez, 2003; Rodriguez, 2003; Chaves, 2009), which is considered to be a global phenomenon in the last decades (Duncan et al., 2009). The belief that a free market and its consequences leads to profit and the most effective development of a nation, is central (Ashcroft et al, 2007). Critics claim that free trade and market economies, as central features of a neoliberal state philosophy, have so far failed to eradicate poverty in South America (Wilkinson, 2005). Neoliberal policies, Wilkinson claims, show little regard for social justice, and weaken the position of vulnerable groups in the society further (Wilkinson, 2005). They also tend to make it difficult to implement educational access and persistency to education for vulnerable groups (FLAPE, 2007).

¹ Colombian authorities operate with a distinctively fewer numbers of displaced people than other trustworthy NGOs, e.g. CODHES. The government has in place a national register (RUPD), but it is known that several IDPs avoid to register because of fear of how their personal data can be used by governmental bodies (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

² A philosophical position that favour free market mechanisms, including cuts in taxes and government spending, privatization. The position involves a strong belief on the human being's ability to make rational choices and to pursue self-interest if it maximizes and satisfies its needs (Vlachou & Christou, 1999).

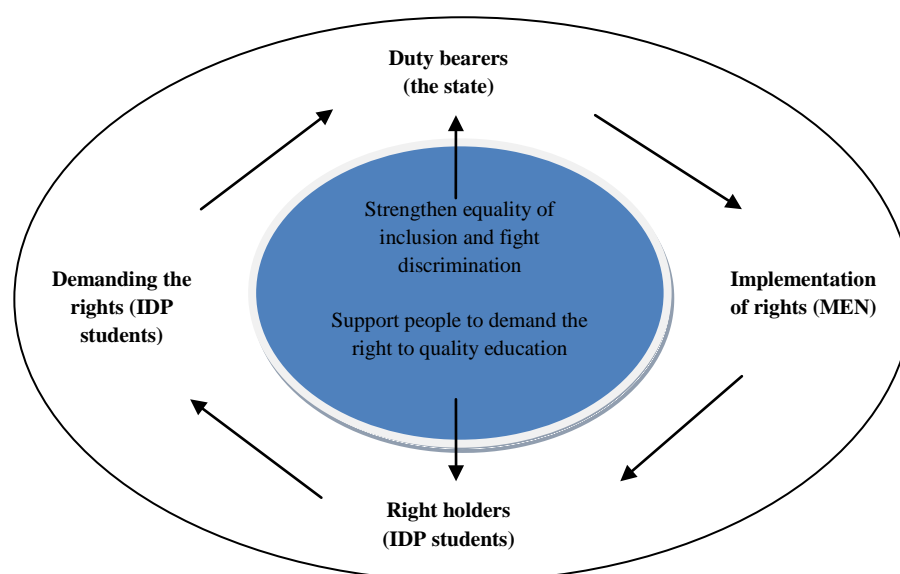
One of the aims of the study is to show challenges of the IDPs which can illuminate what educational policies which fail, and what educational policies which can be suggested to be changed in relation to the educational challenges the IDPs face at the micro level at the schools. A limitation with this aim appears with regard to the impact research for policy change really has for the betterment of IDPs survival in the educational system. One of the obstacles, for instance, is that change in educational policies often has a tendency to focus only at the micro level, overlook potentially structural inequalities at the macro level. The consequence of such lack of focus at the latter level, make the effects of the policies “limited and precarious” (Dyson et al, 2010: 195).

The measure taken to stem the micro-biased focus is to investigating macro-perspectives as a part of the study. In addition, a preparation of specific educational policies in a given country does not necessarily correspond with its implementation. Although the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) states that there is need for “a systematic evaluation and an application of improvement programmes in the educational institutions” (MEN, 2010a), such policy interventions depend on various elements. McLaughlin finds that

“policy cannot always mandate what matters to outcomes at the local level; individual incentives and beliefs are central to local responses; effective implementation requires a strategic balance of pressure and support; policy-directed change ultimately is a problem of the smallest unit” (1987: 171).

Hence, there may be a twisted road from research which spins along rights to education and the factual realities at the micro level; manifested by fully access and survival in the educational system for IDPs in Colombia. In spite of these challenges of policy implementation, it is my hope that this study will in some way contribute to such an evaluation the MEN calls for. It is argued that a rights-based approach in development is concerned with human rights standards and principles “both to the goal and the process of development” (Tun 2007: 34). This interpretation of the HR suggests that the means are becoming equally as important as the ends. Therefore, a rights-based perspective has indirectly been embedded in the study. Below a rights-based approach is illustrated in the context of this study:

Figure 2.1 *A Rights-based Approach in Educational Research*



Source: Based on Theis (2004: 4)

As the figure shows, the children are the right-holders as students in the public educational system, and do also make up the target group by which the implementation of the right to education is headed. The thesis can be considered as a part of the demand to duty bearers. According to the Nueva Constitución Política de Colombia (NCPC),³ the duty bearers of children's rights in Colombia lie within the state, the family, and the society (NCPC; Article 67).⁴ Because these 'agents' can be very wide and abstract, I have chosen to concentrate on the former; namely the state manifested through the educational authorities.

1.1.2 Children as research participants

The intention described above to distribute IDPs' experiences to those in power through policy making, are put in practice by sharing central perspectives of children enrolled in school. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states children's right to express their views in all matters that affect them:

“State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of

³ New Colombian Political Constitution from 1991, and replaced the one from 1886.

⁴ Spanish: "El Estado, la sociedad y la familia son responsables de la educación" (NCPC; Article 67).

the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (Article 12, CRC).

As we can see, the right to participation is acknowledged in matters that are a part of children’s lives. A global evaluation on children affected by armed conflict (Save the Children, 2005) illustrates the pedagogical fruitfulness of including children as a valuable resource in describing social phenomena they are a part of and to valuing them as central informants regarding societal problems. A Ugandan child, after being a victim by the conflict in his country, expresses as a part of the evaluation that “since we are the ones who have undergone these horrible experiences, we know and can articulate our problems better than anyone else” (Save the Children 2005: 15).

Sommer et al. support this statement and claim that “children are remarkable people that interpret what they hear, see, feel, and smell, and they experience situations in ways that not necessarily will be compatible to the ways adults construe their world” (Sommer et al, 2010: 4 in p.). Rosenwald agrees, and claims that the enhancement of children as research participants is a unique criterion for a study because the provision of “a deeper understanding of their problems that permits more effective resolution and action” (1985: 682). Thus, the study has both a perspective of the child by including them as research participants, as well as a child’s perspective by trying to understand experiences from their points of view (Sylva, 2010). Their views will fill a knowledge gap of how IDP students⁵ enrolled in public schools experience the educational system, and will make up the main element of this study. Forthcoming, research objectives and research questions are outlined.

1.2 Research objectives

The research objective of a study is crucial to carry out a sustainable research project. Yin argues that the objective shall be “critical to the substantive field of interest, and that the case study will contribute to the cumulative body of knowledge in that field” (Yin 1993: 110). The target of this study was to carry out research with students enrolled in public education in the war-affected region of Bogotá. Focusing on education should be a high priority, Machel claims, especially when it comes to completion of basic schooling (1996). Earlier studies have

⁵ IDP students are used as the term for describing the group name of children who have been displaced and managed to access public schooling. I realize that the categorization consists of many ethnocultural groups, but choose to use the term “IDP students” because they are homogeneous as a group in the general sample in both schools I investigated.

focused on informal education for IDPs (Bukaasen, 2008), public vs. private education (King et al, 1997; King et al, 1999), IDPs' access to education (Mooney & French, 2005; O'Malley, 2007), including other areas of education and internally displacement. However, little research has been done with IDPs enrolled in public schools. Accordingly, the choice of research target will contribute to the cumulative body of knowledge in education for IDPs in the public educational system. The objectives of the research project are stated below:

1. To provide empirical knowledge of how IDPs are included in the public educational system after incidents of forced displacement
2. To elucidate adaptation processes which take place among internally displaced children and the regular learning environment in the public educational system
3. To map strengths and weaknesses in the sphere of public schooling in Bogotá in order to contribute to the debate of educational survival and outcome for IDPs as a vulnerable group

1.3 Research questions

The objectives resulted in the following research questions:

- I. How do internally displaced children experience the public Colombian educational system?
- II. What factors are strengthening and what factors are weakening the inclusion process for internally displaced children at the schools?
- III. How does national educational policy express education for IDPs?

1.4 Theoretical foundation

Two theories are proven fruitful to comprehend the inclusion process of the IDPs in the two schools. First of all, Goffman's (1963) theoretical approach of understanding processes of discrimination is applied to the social challenges the children faced the first period after enrolment to the schools. Link and Phelan's (2001) concept of stigmatization is also applied to understand discrimination at the two schools. Besides, Bronfenbrenner's ecological

perspective of social systems and the interactions within them has been valuable to understand the social processes the children were a part of as they continued as students in the public schools. Together, they have been considered central to the problem statement and the subsequent data extracted from the case study.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter one shortly introduces the educational context and the main rationale of the study. In addition, it presents the objectives and the research questions which the thesis is built. Chapter two reviews relevant literature and concepts on the background of the conflict, including the political context in Colombia, the educational system, and the case schools used for the empirical data collection. Chapter three outlines the research design and the methodological aspects of the study, including access, methods for data collection and analysis, sampling, quality issues and ethical perspectives. Chapter four explains the main theoretical framework of the study; Goffman's theory of stigma, Link and Phelan's concept of labelling, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system's theory. Chapter five presents and analyzes the empirical findings from the two cases where the data collection took place, and explores these in the light of the theoretical framework. Chapter six sums up and highlights the main findings in the study, and seeks to answer the research questions directly. The final chapter, seven, summarizes the results of the analysis and suggests practical implications for the two case schools as well as for the Ministerio de Educación.

1.6 Summary

A brief introduction of the political violence and internal displacement has been outlined. Few children manage to enter the public educational system while others do not catch up. This study concentrates on the former group and engages these children's reflections on inclusion and educational content, based upon fieldwork at two schools in Bogotá. The rationale of the study is to illuminate challenges IDP children face in adapting to a new educational setting. Also important is the call for policy change in the favour of these students. Finally, it is to provide children's point of view of realities that are of their concern. The next chapter takes a look at the political and educational context in Colombia and presents aspects of Human Rights in education for internally displaced children, as well as issues of inequality to educational access and survival.

2 The Colombian context

To grasp the situation of inclusion of IDPs in Colombia, it is necessary to look at the internal consequences of the conflict which have affected the people and the context they are a part of. This review of relevant literature outlines the political history in Colombia. Carnoy (1992) argues that research on educational problems should clarify relations between the state and its educational system in order to avoid assumptions of their connection. Therefore, the relationship between the Colombian state and the Colombian educational system will be explained. Moreover, we know that the public educational system is negatively affected because of the conflict and the forced displacements in the country (UN, 2007), which subsequently leads to unequal access to education and unequal survival in it. Focusing on equality of survival and outcome, the chapter provides a review of relevant laws on education for IDPs and shows how the educational system is constructed as well as the IDPs' role in it today.

2.1 Political history in Colombia

Since the colonization of South America started in 1492, the continent and its peoples have gone through centuries of economical, cultural, and trade control, followed by independence and a development of democracies (Pedraja, 2005). Colombia gained independence from Spain in 1819 by the South American general Simón Bolívar. Despite its freedom from the colonial power, guerrilla groups have opposed sitting governments in the country. As a consequence, there have been large internal conflicts, which made it difficult for the various governments to develop the nation's educational and health systems. Since the late 1970s and up to this decade, the country has, as South America in general, undergone wide democratization. The development of participation of the people has not changed the fact that inequality is the rule rather than the exception (Drake, 2009). The presidents have become even more powerful, despite a reinforcement of sub-national governments, legislatures and judiciaries. More power to the presidency in Colombia and other South American democracies has lead to a two-folded political development; the governments have obtained civil liberties and human rights, but continue to abuse them (Drake, 2009). The reasons might vary, and the guerrilla war is undoubtedly one of the obstacles to predictability in the

implementation of different human rights. A quote by the former president Álvaro Uribe⁶ (2002-2010) illustrates the ambivalent relationship between defence and security on the one hand, and the lack of justice of rights on the other hand:

“Of course we need to eliminate social injustice in Colombia, but what is first? Peace. Without peace, there is no investment. Without investment, there are no fiscal resources for the government to invest in the welfare of the people” (“Uribe Defends Security Policies”, BBC News, 11/18/04).

Somehow simplified, it seems that there is a contradiction between investment on the one hand and fulfilment of human rights such as education on the other. Fighting for such a “peace for investment”, Uribe introduced a “democratic security” plan in his government’s effort to defeat violent groups associated with terrorism”⁷ (Jaramillo, 2010), such as FARC and ELN. To defeat the guerrillas and reach the goal as indicated in the quote above, the military budget was 14.2% of the GDP in 2009. When we compare this percentage with the investment in the educational sector, one finds that the latter is not a prioritized sector of the government. Indeed, the country’s educational budget has for the first time sunk below the military budget, with a 13.9% investment (El Espectador, 10/21/09). Bennett argues that armed internal conflicts like the one in Colombia is a “precursor to a disintegrated state”, where the “rule of law has been lost” (Bennett 1998, 4). Thus, it is hard to argue that an increase of the military investments has led to less internal conflict.

However, the presidency of Uribe has remained popular, and one of the main reasons was his government’s efforts to achieve more security in the urban areas. The methods used to reach a state of security are extensive use of armed forces against the FARC, ELN, and other paramilitary groups. A close cooperation with the U.S government on fighting the drug traffic has contributed to large-scale financing of weapons and military personnel.⁸ As a consequence, an increasing number of civilians have been forced to flee from the places where governmental forces and guerrillas clash. Such a discontent is also expressed among

⁶ Álvaro Uribe has been the presidential candidate in Colombia during two periods, and aimed for a third election this year. The Constitution, however, prevented a further re-election (See <http://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/02/27/colombia/1267226285.html> for a reference to the incident.

⁷ In addition to having such a focus on peace within Colombia, he has denied that there were conflicts within the Colombian society (Jarmillo, 2010) and rather claimed that “hordes of terror” threatened the state and society. This is an interesting discussion on how labeling of other opponent groups as terrorists in the country leads to pro-active use of military forces, and as an outcome effect this prevents the development of the Human rights in practice. The limitations of the study do not permit me to go further into this side of the debate.

⁸ Practically through the “Plan Colombia” with its main target to use military power to fight drug lords and cocaine production throughout the countryside.

various people. Some utter dissatisfaction with the aggressive politics that the government has favoured, at the same time as the right to education is weakened in the shape of the lack of educational opportunities as this armed conflict continues (Fieldnotes, 11/13/09). The forthcoming section presents literature on central legal framework.

2.2 Internal displacement in Colombia

Despite the high number of internally displaced people in the world, IDPs are automatically neglected by the existing international legal framework because they are not included in the normal 'refugee' term. Literature on refugee law states that only refugees who have managed to flee across another border automatically are protected by the UN. In 1998 the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were made (OCHA, 1998), which are 30 guidelines on what protective measures which should be taken to protect IDPs. Based upon the HR, UN member states, governmental and non-governmental organizations, they maintain that the state is obligated to ensure that IDPs

“shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country (...) they shall not be discriminated against the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced” (OCHA 1998; Principle 1).

OCHA says that one becomes an IDP when he or she has been

“forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border” (OCHA 1998: Online).

The definitions vary, but are fairly similar. However, Colombian law, as expressed in Law number 387 from 1997, the IDP definition is a bit wider. It emphasizes internal disturbances, and acknowledges previous circumstances which have lead to public chaos, but excludes natural⁹ or human-made disasters as a part of the understanding. Both definitions are similar when it comes to different violations of HR. Although the state of Colombia signed the UN's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement the same year of the principles' establishment, the signing is problematic because the Colombian government plays a central role in the internal conflict by directly or indirectly forcing people to leave their homes from rural parts

⁹ See for instance the discourse of Environmental refugees (Bates, 2002).

of the country, thus becoming one of the causes which lead to displacement. The last census by the National Statistical Bureau estimates a population of 45.5 million people (DANE, 2005a). As mentioned initially, 4.9 million people are likely to be displaced from their own homes¹⁰ (IDMC, 2010). In this case, the IDP population constitutes 10.8% of the total population. On the other hand, the Colombian government estimates the IDP population to be far less; 2.6 million people, which give a significantly lower percentage of 5.7%. In 2008, 6.5% of the IDP population belonged to an indigenous group, increasing from 3.4% in 2005 (IDMC, 2009). The percentage of indigenous IDPs is high, given that their total population percentage is about 2%. Indigenous groups can therefore be considered being more vulnerable than the general displaced population, and they are one of the main groups affected by internal displacement (IDMC, 2009).

One of the consequences of the military interventions by the government has been a removal of indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations from their own territories, often in collaboration with large companies within palm oil, mining, and the banana industry that indirectly force the people to implement their economic projects (Jaramillo, 2010). Rojas (Personal Communication, 09/11/09) asserts that “the armed conflict in Colombia has contributed to a range of difficult conditions for IDP children, e.g. malnutrition, long distances to school, frequent mobility of the family, social and affective problems, drop-outs from school and inability of school re-adaptation, rigidity in the management of the school times, directive and standardized school, and school infrastructure.” Not all of these factors are experienced by the IDP informants in this study, e.g. adaptation challenges and social problems are common in both cases.¹¹ The next section briefly presents the public educational system, as well as the relevant legal framework on public schooling.

¹⁰ The number is based on a Colombian NGO; CODHES' (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento) in cooperation with NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council), with cumulative statistics since 1985. The difference can be explained by the government's data collection method: Their estimate has only been cumulative only since 1994 and does not include statistical data of intra-urban displacement and displacement caused by crop fumigations (IDMC, 2009).

¹¹ These factors are further discussed in the analysis chapter (5).

2.3 The public educational system

Historically, two educational¹² programmes with relatively good effects have been implemented in Colombia. In 1991 the educational authorities in Colombia created a voucher system with the aim to expand the capacity of secondary schooling. It was founded on the idea of economical cost-sharing between central and local governments (80-20 split), which used a lottery system to choose poor students who would need the vouchers most. Since the initiation of the system of vouchers, more than 100.000 students from poor backgrounds have benefited (King et al, 1997), a number which must be assumed to have increased in present year.

Also, a comprehensive programme to increase the educational quality in the rural areas of Colombia was put into practice in 1976 to meet the national challenges of seeing children through a complete course of primary school, namely the Escuela Nueva programme (Psacharopoulos et al, 1993). The programme was first and foremost targeted at rural areas of Colombia, and is considered to have had a significant effect on student outcomes. The Escuela Nueva programme has adapted child-centred teaching methodologies, a flexible curriculum, and community engagement (Fundación Escuela Nueva, 2010), which in the wake of the implementation is seen as an educational success (Little, 1995) because of the student outcomes as well as the model “has proven to be economically feasible” (Schiefelbein 1992: 16).

2.3.1 Structural features

The education sector includes 25.173 institutions, and yearly 11 million children enrol, which makes up a total student population of 161 million per 2008 (DNP, 2010). Whereas 45% of the higher education institutions are private, only 17% of the primary and secondary educational institutions are privatized (DNP, 2010). Formal education in Colombia is organized in four levels, and is constructed as a system of cycles as showed below:

¹² MEN's definition of education: “A process of life-long personal, cultural and social formation that is based on an integrated conception of the human being, including their dignity, rights, and duties” (MEN, 2010c).

Figure 2.2 *The formal Colombian educational structure*

Cycles	Grade	Age		Level
Fifth cycle	10 th and 11 th grade	15 - 17	}	Upper secondary education
Fourth cycle	8 th and 9 th grade	12 - 15	}	Secondary basic education
Third cycle	5 th , 6 th and 7 th grade	10 - 12	}	Secondary basic education
Second cycle	3 rd and 4 th grade	8 - 10	}	Primary basic education
First cycle	1 st and 2 nd grade	5 - 8	}	Pre-school education

Source: Secretaría de Educación (2008: 11); Ministry of Education (2010c)

The first consists of pre-school for children who are below eight years old, whereby one year is mandatory. From eight years and onward, the students follow five grades of primary basic education, followed by five years of secondary basic education which are all mandatory. Grades 10 and 11 of upper secondary school are not mandatory. After the 11th grade students voluntarily continue to higher education.

2.3.2 Access

The NCPC regards education as an individual right where the state ensures its quality as well as guarantee both access and survival in the educational system. Normally the students are 15 years old when they end the cycle, whereby formal schooling is mandatory:

“It [education] shall be obligatory between 5 and 15 years old, and shall comprehend one year of preschool and nine years of basic education as a minimum” (NCPC; Article 67).¹³

The access to public schools for IDPs goes through a formal path of three stages. Practically, when a family has been displaced and arrive to a city it has the opportunity to either contact the Alcaldía, the governmental organization Acción Social, the Public Ministry, or the Unidad de Atención y Orientación. Some IDPs avoid registering into one of these governmental bodies in fear of taking sides in the political conflict in the country, or in fear of being threatened by one of the political sides. Those who do, however, are registered in the Registro Único de Población Desplazada¹⁴ (RUPD) and are forwarded to the Secretary of Education in order to be sent to a school (MEN, 2010b). The registration in the RUPD register guarantees

¹³ Spanish: “Que [la educación] será obligatoria entre los cinco y los quince años de edad y que comprenderá como mínimo, un año de preescolar y nueve de educación básica” (NCPC; Article 67).

¹⁴ English: Central Registry for Displaced Population.

free school fees the first year after enrolment into a school, and ensures by this arrangement the right to education in terms of access. On the other hand, there are reported cases (Tomaševski, 2004) where IDP families have had to choose between the provision of food and of letting their children continue at school after the period of guarantee through the register:

“The education authorities’ power to assess a family’s capacity to pay confronts people with a cruel choice: either eat or go to school” (Tomaševski, 2004).

Because of the guarantee only is valid for one year, the IDPs have to pay a school fee of 85.000COL¹⁵ when they attend the second. Several households do not afford these costs, as illustrated by the quote above. As a consequence students are likely to drop out of school in order to make ends meet. The research participants in this study represent IDPs who have gone through the above mentioned stages of registration and accessed the schools with such a document of displacement do in this sense constituting an exclusively group.

The overall responsibility to ensure equality of survival in the educational system - according to a rights-based perspective - lies within the education authorities. The next section outlines relations between the Human rights and education.

2.4 Human rights and the Colombian Constitution

The idea behind the Human Rights (HR) is that all human beings in the world have a set of basic rights irrespective of whom we are and where we come from. Most countries consider the HR to be universal, inseparable, and mutually dependent with each other (Tun et al, 2007). They are defined as “norms that exist in morality and in law at the national and international levels” (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2006). Sen emphasizes that these norms include strong ethical pronouncements of what should be done, and that the HR stipulate an

“acknowledgement of imperatives and indicate that something needs to be done for the realization of these recognized freedoms that are identified through these rights” (Sen 2009: 357).

¹⁵ 1800 COL (Colombian Peso) is equal to 1 USD (United States Dollar) pr. September, 2010.

The practice behind the HR is an important legal framework to fight poverty and promote development, and that taking HR seriously “requires us to recognize that it would be bad - sometimes terrible - if they were violated” (Sen 2009: 360). Nevertheless, there is sound criticism of the very idea of universal human rights. Firstly, HR are not seen as legal rights (Sen, 2009). Colombian law, however, based on certain HR, is enshrined through legislation and is therefore considered as common law. Secondly, the philosophical ground of HR is questioned in terms of their claim of universality. Hammad, for instance, advocates that it is a highly politically charged concept (2004). Likewise, Rawls says that countries do not need to recognize the philosophical ground of HR because they are necessarily based on more dominating cultures, but can still claim HR fulfilled on the practical level (Rawls cited in Wetlesen & Thommesen, 1996: 140).¹⁶ Sen argues that they can serve, both in practice and theory, as a basis when a country makes new legislations (Sen, 2009), but warns that they can be “very attractive as a general belief, and it may even be politically effective as rhetoric” (Sen 2009: 355). The HR as rhetoric in Colombia can be illustrated by the NRC, which suggests that there is a discrepancy between policies apparently based on human rights, and the real implementation of them by the Colombian government (NRC, 2009), which indicates that the Colombian governments has used the legalization of HR more as a rhetoric than an actual practice. In the following section, examples of practical aspects of the right to educational rights are outlined.

2.5 Educational rights and realities in Colombia

The responsibility of finding solutions that can help IDPs getting access to and to survive in the educational system lies within the state, as expressed in the Human Declaration of the Human Rights (UDHR 1948; Article 26) and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1990; Article 28). The right is equivalent to article 67 in the Constitution (1991), stating that education is a person’s right and a public service with an important social function.¹⁷ Negative consequences of not fulfilling this responsibility, is that the children

¹⁶ If we follow Rawls' thought, one can have a look at how the HR are reflected through Colombia’s policies and practice by empirical studies as this one, to both reveal and suggest how the state (macro level) and the schools (micro level) can walk the line to make rhetoric’s into practice; in this case provision of quality education for IDP children in the public schools. This means that the answers extracted from the data by the IDPs helped me to interpret the implementation of their rights to education.

¹⁷ Each and all quotes from law, policy, and other documents produced or has its origin from Colombia are translations by the researcher (Spanish to English).

suffer because of abruptions in their daily lives, and that the development of the educational system stagnates (Save the Children, 2009; Humphreys & Varshney, 2004). In a global perspective, conflicts and armed violence are the main reasons why goal number two of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not yet fulfilled (Stewart, 2003; UNDP, 2010), i.e. to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (UN, 2000). The national impacts on the educational system in the case of Colombia are violence, threats, and assassinations of teachers and students, forced recruitment of children from schools, and attacks on school buildings by paramilitary groups as well as the Colombian army (O’Malley 2007; O’Malley 2010). The responsibility of breaking these cycles of violence and an adequately managed educational system lies within the state. The CRC advocates that governments “must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war” (Article 38). In terms of educational access, each member state of the UN is legally obliged to secure displaced children, regardless of

“where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor (...) No child should be treated unfairly on any basis” (UNICEF 1979; Article 2).

In terms of the legal obligation, the Colombian state made a law in 1997 particularly addressed for IDPs. On the responsibility of the educational institutions, it states:

The Ministry of Education shall develop special educational programs for victims of ‘the Violence’. Such programs may be specialized and being developed differently from the conventional ones, in order to guarantee rapid effects of the social rehabilitation (Gobierno de Bogotá 1997, Ley 387; Article 19, Paragraph 10).

Gibbs (2000) argues that there is a clear relationship between legal law and social justice. In relation with the NCPC’s legal framework, the responsibility of an increased social justice lies within the state. The Constitution emphasizes that all persons are equal and shall have equal rights:

“All persons are born free and equal, they will receive the same protection and be treated equal by the authorities, and enjoy the same rights, independence and opportunities without discrimination based on sex, race, national or familiar origin, language, religion, political opinion or philosophical view. The state shall encourage the conditions so that the equality is real and effective, and adopt measures in favour of discriminated or marginalized groups” (NCPC; Article 13).

Since it emphasizes the special concern of discriminated and marginalized groups, one can ask how this is written in the policy directed to IDPs as a discriminated group. The concept of equality in article 13 (NCPC) is both linked to equal treatment by the authorities as well as promoting real equalities of various “conditions”. In regard to education, the Constitution recognizes it as a fundamental right of the child, and that it is even more important than other rights. The duty bearers are divided into three agents:

“The family, the society and the state have the liability to assist and protect the child to guarantee its harmonious and integral development (...) the rights of the child have precedence over the remaining rights” (NCPC; Article 44).

Even if the family, the society, and the state are provided by statute the protection of the child, the real responsibilities are somewhat unclear. Sommer and Samuelsson advocate that the responsibility of children’s rights lies with every adult who are close to them, and that the development of the child’s identity is an obligation for both the society as well as “for the individual caregiver”, e.g. the local school (Sommer & Samuelsson 2010: 220).

2.5.1 The Constitution and ethnocultural groups

Before the NCPC of 1991, Colombia had not formally recognized the diversity of the different cultures associated with the indigenous groups. Currently, people from ethnic groups have the right to a relevant cultural content in education:

“The substantial part of the ethnic groups will have the right to an education that respects and develops their cultural identity” (NCPC; Article 68).

Afro-descendants make up the largest ethnocultural group in Colombia, constituting 10.6% of the total population (Dane, 2005), whereas the indigenous population recorded a 3.4 %, making up 87 different peoples living in various *departamentos*.¹⁸ With such a diverse and multicultural variation of peoples, it is a challenge to provide an education that respects and develops all cultural identities that are represented in Colombia, thus becoming “one of the most difficult issues that democracy has to tackle” (Sen 2009: 352). The NCPC, however, acknowledges and seems to value highly the different cultural identities in Colombia;¹⁹ article

¹⁸ The country consists of 33 “departamentos” (English: “Provinces”), where about 80% of the indigenous population have their home in the Cauca, Nariño, and Guajira provinces (UN, 2010b).

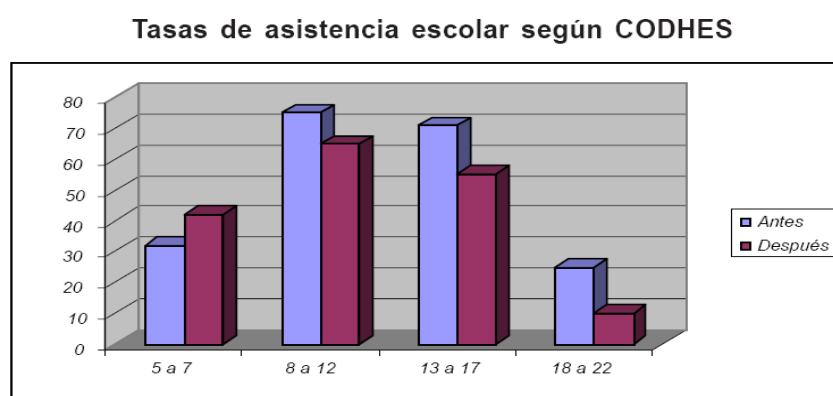
¹⁹ Labeling ethnic groups as “minority groups” implies relative powerlessness and discrimination, Berry (1994, cited in Greenfield & Cocking, 1994: Preface) suggests the term “ethnocultural group”, which reflects the equality of all groups within a multicultural society. Colombia defines itself as a state of a multicultural population (NCPC), hence there will be referred to the same term in the forthcoming text when writing about groups that represents cultural minorities in the cases of

70 states that the various cultures are the “foundation of the nation”, while article 7 advocates that the state recognizes and “protects the ethnic and cultural diversity in the Colombian nation” (NCPC).

2.5.2 Access, enrolment and survival in the educational system

In Colombia, the Violence has, in addition, worsened the inequality to educational access. After a displacement occurs, the children face difficulties of being enrolled at the new area of residence. The figure below illustrates that the school attendance becomes drastically lower after being displaced:

Figure 2.3 Access to formal education before²⁰ and after displacement in Colombia



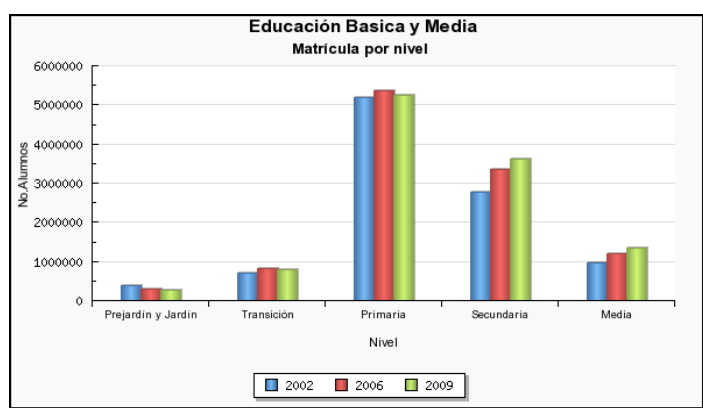
Source: NRC (2007)

But in spite of low access into the educational system by IDPs, the general net enrolment ratio (NER) reached as high as 90% in 2008 at the primary level, and decreased to 71.2% at the secondary level (WB, 2008). Hence, the decrease of approximately 20% from primary to secondary schooling is significantly high. Two elements emerge based on the figure and the NER data; the first is that it is difficult to enrol into the public educational system after being displaced. The other element is that there are high drop-outs from public schools after the primary course. However, despite such a decrease in the NER from primary to secondary education, it is reported that it has increased the latest years, as illustrated in the figure below:

inquiry in Bogotá. Exceptions are made in the discussion of how stigmatization appears to show relationships between students who form up the majority and minority respectively (Section 5.2).

²⁰ Variables from Figure 2.6 in English: Antes = before, despues = after.

Figure 2.4 Enrolment in primary and secondary schooling in Colombia



Translations to English

Primaria: Primary school

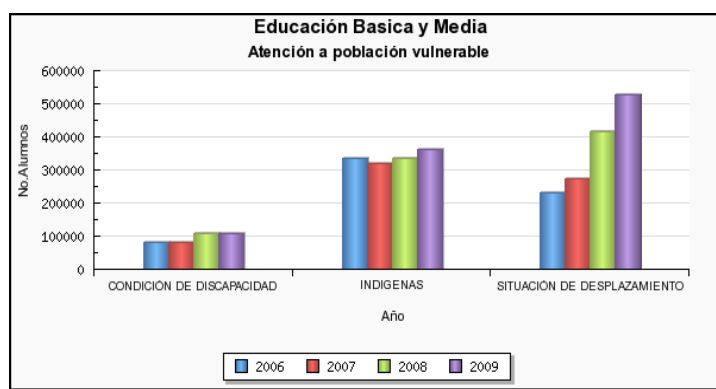
Secundaria: Secondary school

Media: Upper secondary school

Source: SINEB (2009a)

It is difficult to find trustworthy quantitative data who can tell how much of this number which are IDPs, as also pointed out by Tomaševski (2004). But as figure 2.5 tells us, it is an increasingly trend; more and more IDP children are enrolled into the educational system, at least since 2006 until 2009. The figure below shows a rather steady increase of enrolment among IDPs:

Figure 2.5 Enrolment of IDPs to obligatory schooling in Colombia



Translations to English

Discapacidad: Disabled

Indígenas: Indigenous people

Desplazamiento: Displaced

Source: SINEB (2009b).

Numbers from Sistema Nacional de Información Educación Básica (SINEB) indicate an increase of the net enrolment ratio for IDPs the last four years. But again, these numbers do not tell us anything about whether IDP children survive in the educational system or not. The definition in the MDG framework defines the survival rate whether a student completes a full primary course. One could wonder if the survival rate would be lower the higher NER is, but WB statistics imply that the survival rate in primary schools increased in the last decade; from

67% in 2002, to 82% in 2005²¹ (WB, 2010). The statistics from the same source do not mention the NER at secondary schooling, hence they cannot explain the 20% - decrease in NER after primary education completion. Accordingly, the access of education for IDPs in Colombia can be considered to be stable, at least within this relatively short period. At the same time, it is difficult to measure whether the access concurrently has led to an increased equality of survival for IDP students explicitly. Another criticism of this number is that it only includes the IDPs who are registered in the national register of the displaced population, RUPD, which made up only 65.7% in 2009 (CODHES, 2009), thus failing to see the unknown proportion of IDP children who not yet are registered here (34.3%).

2.5.3 Inequality in the public educational system

The Education for All (EFA) meeting in Jomtien in 1990 centred mainly on access to education, while the approach at the follow-up EFA ten years later in Dakar appeared to be on the quality as well (Torres, 2001). Each government has the main responsibility and mandate for the task of reaching all children with quality education. In terms of content, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement advocate that the content of education “should respect their cultural identity, language and religion” (OCHA 1998: 23). Suina and Smolkin find that adaptation is greatly enhanced when “teachers are aware of the ways that teaching and learning occur within a non-dominant culture” (1994: 129), which might contribute to the quality by reflecting upon cultural differences from where the students come from and what cultures they represent.

In spite of the increased number of access to education for IDP children as outlined above, there is generally a high level of inequality in Latin-America (PNUD, 2010). The gaps in educational access and quality are related to racial and ethnic neglects, and can be explained to the colonial history:

“The unequal distribution of resources that characterizes the region today follows a pattern set with specific traits of European colonization in the region” (WB 2003: Online).

Subsequently, adoption of “specific policies to help indigenous people and Afro-descendants” is considered crucial to break this pattern of inequality (WB, 2003). The UN body seems to link inequality to education and the fact that children are out-of-school, and suggests in a

²¹ 2009 numbers not available at the WB.

MDG report that poverty is the biggest obstacle to reaching universal enrolment to education within 2015 (UN, 2010). The report, however, does not mention inequality *within* the school, and how the students themselves experience the content or other circumstances related to the quality of education. Tungaraza (2004) deepens this perspective and relates inequality of outcome to a change of structural barriers:

“The provision of equality of opportunity must be combined with social justice principles to provide equality to marginalized groups. Social justice provides equitable outcomes to marginalized groups by recognizing past disadvantage and existence of structural barriers embedded in the social, economic, and cultural system that perpetuate systemic discrimination. Social justice provides a framework to assess the impact of policies and practices” (Tungaraza 2004: Online).

The Education for All (EFA) framework from Dakar (2000), decided upon the importance of quality in education to reach the Millennium Development Goals before 2015. An education of high quality is considered to be crucial for a healthy development of any society. UNICEF (2009) says quality education implies that the schools are working in the interests of children and provide

“safe and protective schools that are adequately staffed with trained teachers, equipped with adequate resources and graced with appropriate conditions for learning...Recognizing that different children face different circumstances and have different needs, such schools build on the assets children bring from their homes and communities” (UNICEF 2009: 20).

Although Colombia is categorized by the UNDP (2009) as a “high human development country” and has a gross enrolment ratio of primary and secondary education services on 99.6% for men and 95.7 % for women (UN, 2010), large educational inequalities exist (MDG Report 2010). Colombia is a rather rich country economically, placed at 77 out of 111 in the UN’s Human Development Index (UNDP, 2009). The methods that lie within the index are based on three indicators to give a picture of how developed a country is. The first is the term *per capita income*, a number derived by dividing the total national income by the total population (Ghatak, 2003). Secondly, the life expectancy is measured. *Education* is the third indicator on which the Human Development Index is constructed, based on adult literacy rate, and the combined *gross enrolment ratio* for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (UNDP, 2009). However, this index merely shows the access to education in a given country and fails to contribute to a qualitative idea of how children experience their own situation, e.g. the numbers of IDP students in the urban areas in Colombia.

Moreover, it seems that there is a discrepancy between what the government reports and what research informs. The Millennium Development Goals' (MDG) statistical framework, for instance, tells us that Colombia already has achieved universal primary education; achievement of the MDG number 2 is labelled as "goal achieved" (MDG, 2010). In contrast, Bukaasen (2009) finds that approximately 75% of the displaced children in Colombia did not have access to formal education in 2009. Quantitative evidence supports this data, illustrated by NGO research (2006). This data suggest that roughly 162.000 children between 12 and 18 years are outside the formal school system. The focus of this study, however, lies with the children who have accessed any public school, and who *manage* to stay there. As we can see, the children who are internally displaced and have access to formal education in Colombia constitute roughly 15% of the total student population thus making up a clear minority compared to the IDP population in general, as well as instituting a minority among "normal" children enrolled in the public education system.

Statistically, the general drop-out rate of primary schools²² was 15.25% in 2005 (WB, 2005), a number indicating that only approximately 85% children continue a full course of primary education. These numbers indicate a low extent of equality of survival, i.e. the future prospects of persistency throughout the school system to the end of primary education (Farrell, 1992), and shows a discrepancy to the legal right for any child to persist in the Colombian public education system (NCPC; Article 67).

Equality of outcome, which indicates the future prospects that the IDP students will learn the same as their peers throughout primary and secondary education, is more difficult to measure, but the data material will give indicators on what areas effective as well as ineffective learning takes place. These areas are analyzed in the sub-sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

2.6 The school cases

The cases I will use in this thesis were chosen with one precondition; schools where IDPs were a part of the total student population. One of the cases is from the south of Bogotá and the other to the north of the capital. What is common is that they are both district schools and

²² The drop-out rate is given in percentage of how many students of a cohort of the total students who are enrolled to the first grade of primary education and "who are not expected to reach the last grade of primary education. The percentage's calculation is based on 100% minus the survival rate to the last grade of primary education (The WB draws on UNESCO Institute for Statistics' data sources, online: http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF_Language=eng).

publicly owned by the Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá, i.e. to the provincial education authorities.

2.6.1 Suba District

The Suba district²³ lies to the north of Bogotá, and represents a part of the capital where a minor part of IDPs from rural regions of Colombia arrive. The population in the district is assumed to reach 950.000 by 2010, based on an estimated increase each year of 10-12 percent (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2002). The school that was part of this study is one of the 49 public schools in the district. Even if the school could not determine with certainty the number of IDPs among the student population, they considered them to be a minority at the school. One formal list of about 40 names had been made. According to conversations with teachers, there are reasons to believe that the number is higher (Fieldnotes, 10/26/09).

2.6.2 Usme District

The district of Usme has fewer inhabitants, according to official statistics it has a population of approximately 325.000 inhabitants, adjusted for immigration from other districts or departments of the country (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2002). Since it is located to the south of the capital, many IDPs coming from the south, do settle down in this area. The coordinator of the school said that the IDP students constituted the majority with 120 students in the school (Fieldnotes, 11/06/09).

2.7 Summary

The chapter has presented a status of the Colombian educational system and the right to education for IDPs in the Colombian Constitution. Moreover, it has explained the relations between the educational system and the armed conflict, as well as having shown how it relates to the cultural and political history of Latin America as a whole. The next chapter presents the methodology behind the study.

²³ Spanish: "Localidad". Suba district is categorized as "Localidad 11", out of totally 20 districts ("localidades"). Usme district is on the other hand categorized as "Localidad 9".

3 Methodology

A methodology in the research context can be defined as a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This chapter describes the design, methods, and quality related to the fieldwork that was conducted in Colombia from the 1st of October to the 20th of November, 2009. It shows how access was obtained with the schools I used as case studies, including sampling strategies to get in touch with them and the research participants. Moreover, it is argued why the different methods were chosen, as well as looking at the strengths and weaknesses that emerged. In the end, quality issues such as trustworthiness and authenticity are discussed, as well as the ethical considerations during the project. The chapter is divided into five minor parts; design, access to the cases, outline of the methods used, sampling and quality issues.

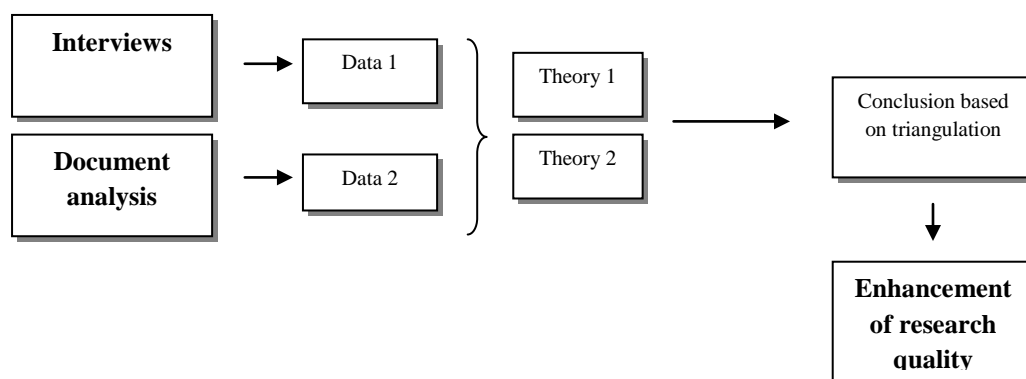
3.1 Design

This study has a constructivist approach, aiming to study “people in their natural settings” (Charmaz 2003: 251), and uses qualitative methods to illuminate the IDP students at the schools in Bogotá. The design of a study depends on the purpose of the project, which in this case will be “to illuminate a societal concern” (Patton 2002: 213). It lies within the notion of “applied research” (Patton, 2002), in this case it involves research on how IDPs are included as students in the public school in urban settlements. This social phenomenon was also the case which I have examined. Thus, the design of the thesis drew on a case study approach. The process of inclusion necessarily involves various actors and forms a system of personal and environmental features. According to Stake (2003: 135), a system can be investigated as a case; “functional or dysfunctional, rational or irrational”. Yin (1993) defines a case study as a research focus on a specific location, community or organization. Moreover, it aims to cover “both a particular phenomenon and the context within which the phenomenon is occurring” (Yin 1993: 31). In this study the phenomenon is the displaced children who are students in two urban public schools. The design involves a multiple-case study and is used in order to get a comprehension of the inclusion process of IDPs across possible diverse environments (Yin, 1993). Patton agrees upon the rationale of a comparative element, pointing out that we may better understand different social phenomena when they are “compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations” (Patton 2008: 58). Such a comparative

element in the design allowed me to contrast and liken cases with the same methods. The total sample was 15 children (Appendix B), with a variation in school age from 9 – 19 years. In total, nine students, six girls and three boys were from the Suba district. The school in Usme district included the other part; three girls and three boys (Appendix B).

The interview findings are analyzed with the tools of grounded theory. The policy document *Revolución Educativa (RE)* by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) is looked at to triangulate the data from the open-ended interviews. The document is examined within the context of what Newby (2010) calls power and equality relationships, also an approach described as a critical discourse analysis. The macro-oriented approach with the interviews and the macro-oriented approach of the educational policy documents may cause diffuseness, but is complementary in terms of triangulation. Triangulation is considered to strengthen a study's quality because of the combination of different methods (Patton, 2002), and to “achieve broader and often better results” in qualitative research (Fontana & Frey 2005: 722). The methodological issue of triangulation involves the use of multiple methods, data sources, and researchers that enhance the quality of a research (Mathison, 1988). The principle is illustrated below:

Figure 3.1 *The principle of triangulation as a mean of corroborating qualitative data*



(Source: Based on Newby 2010: 123)

As we can see, triangulation of multiple methods, i.e. interviews and document analysis as well as two main theories are put in practice in order to be able to corroborate the data (Newby, 2010). The conclusions which is based on such a triangulation, enhances the quality of the research.

3.1.1 Delimitations of the research design

A delimitation of the sample is the biased sample of research participants (Appendix B); IDP students' stories. Indeed, it is argued that one has to "take into account the full interpersonal system operating in a given setting" (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 66), implicating that one cannot depend on the children's stories alone to get a holistic view of the inclusion process IDPs face within the educational system. A delimitation of the design is that it leaves out of account stories from other social actors in the cases. However, the children's experiences are the main objective to explore, and potential other social agents such as parents, teachers, and peers in the educational context are not parts of the design due to the time scope of the study. In regard to the use of open-ended interviews, the use of this method alone would have made it difficult in providing a sufficient comprehensive perspective in the inquiry (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a decision to triangulate with a document analysis was utilized as a mean to broaden the study's perspective.

Moreover, inductive approaches of a study may lead to a loss of relevant focus of the case of investigation because of the narrow process of coding the data material into smaller sequences (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To stem up for potential consequences for losing important contexts within the case, I went back to the raw material several times during the coding process, as well as seeking deeper into literature on the field as the research proceeded.

3.2 Access

Purposeful sampling is often used in case studies because it provides the researcher with illuminative and data rich with information (Patton, 2002). This sampling method is typical for qualitative inquiries, and helps the researcher to understand a social phenomenon and a certain case in depth. The need of accessing the "target communities" to undertake the research was at hand. Cohen et al. claim that such access is "the first important stage related to access to the field of educational research" (2007: 55). Solid contacts were limited before departure from Norway. Before arrival I had one contact at the National University of Colombia,²⁴ and they initiated contact with an Associate Professor who helped me access one of the two schools I decided upon for inquiry. She introduced me to the school's coordinator

²⁴ La Universidad Nacional de Bogotá was established in 1867, and is the largest higher education institution in the country. At present day it holds about 40.000 students, and is the major research institution in Colombia. Thus, I found it natural to start searching for relevant contacts here.

at a public school in the Usme District. A meeting with the coordinator of the school was arranged, which resulted in an informed consent to carry out interviews with displaced students. Access to the other school which I needed in order to provide the comparable perspective as the design suggested, was a path of unforeseen obstacles. Relevant contacts to another schools which would be positive of receiving a researcher was absent during the first period of the field work. However, a pivotal stage of the access of a school case number two suddenly occurred in the informal setting of a market place in Bogotá:

“This evening I coincidentally stopped by a booth at one of the markets in the main street in the city. I started some small-talk with the owner, and she asked me what I was doing in Bogotá. I briefly told her about the study, and mentioned that it was quite a challenge to get in touch with relevant people and getting access to public schools. Then her husband stepped forward from the mild darkness in the booth, presented himself, and told me he was a technician at the University, unhesitant to help me in contacting academics. I confirmed that I was interested and we planned to meet at the University campus tomorrow” (Fieldnotes, 10/16/2010).

The incident turned the anticipations about the possibility of a comparing perspective from mild despair to sober optimism. The University employee initiated contact with a scientist who had a research project at a school in the Suba District of Bogotá, and she invited me to the school, resulting in a similar meeting as with the coordinator at the school in Usme. These series of events as they started with the e-mail correspondence with the National University and the coincidental meeting at the market may best be explained as a snowball sampling method (Bryman, 2008). A typical snowball, or chain sampling, happens when the researcher “makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others” (Bryman 2008: 184). Here, the cases were identified through a range of recommendations from people that knew other people, which finally ended up with an agreement of carrying out interviews that were applied to the study (Patton, 2002).

3.3 Research methods

The fieldwork is the most central activity of a qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002), and requires a range of techniques, whereby the most common ones are interviews, observations, records, films, and documents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open-ended interviews made up the main method to answer the research questions, together with a document analysis in order to triangulate the data and to provide a macro focus of the micro-oriented stories with the IDP

students. The aim of this section is to explain these two methods with their strengths and weaknesses, including a description of how the analysis was conducted.

3.3.1 Open-ended interviews

The main research question is how IDP children experienced being a student in the public Colombian education system. The method most valuable to answer the first research question (RP) had to be strictly relevant to express children's views. The main method used to provide data for the answer was open-ended interviews; a qualitative technique which is guided by topics to be covered and questions that have open endings (Newby, 2010). The method does also open up for follow-up questions; a valuable opportunity when the research participants' stories required further exploration.

Using interviews as a method, it is a prime necessity to develop an interview-guide (Dalen, 2004). Such a guide helps the researcher to explore issues of interest as well as keeping the interview on track related to the RP's; the outcome of the guide provides potentially rich data material (Newby, 2010). In addition, the research participants can speak freely, at the same time as the researcher can be sure that the interviewees were asked the same type of questions (Patton, 2002). In total, 20 open-ended questions consisting of six subject areas made up the interview guide; namely inclusion, discrimination, access, content, coping mechanisms, and future (Appendix A). Even if there were relatively many questions, the interview guide was conversation-oriented in its design. The questions were not asked rigidly; several research participants continued to talk about experiences that touched or overlapped the subject areas. Such a use of an interview-guide was relevant in terms of enforcing the children's perspective of the study, as suggested in sub-section 1.1.2, resulting in more trustworthy answers and stories. In some occasions during the interviews the open-ended questions were combined with more explicit questions, a practice which is advisable in a context of exploring issues through conversations (Riessman, 1993).

A weakness of interviews is that we can not necessarily claim they form an exclusively valid material which reflects the reality of the research participants. Mishler (1986) warns relying too heavily on analyses based on interviews because they do not necessarily describe reality. Subsequently, the individuals' perceptions of their own realities remain the most important source of information. Form and content of the interview may also affect the respondents during the interview process (Mishler, 1986). As a consequence, the reality may change

further. In addition, interviews as a method “hinder the natural form of discourse between the interviewer and the interviewee”, Mishler claims (1986: 137). To avoid such a situation where the children would end up only answering mechanically to the interview-guide questions, frequent pauses were made, which created “room to speak” (Mishler 1986: 69) to the benefit of narratives, as well as getting a conversation as normal as possible. A technique that presumably promoted a natural form of conversation was applied, namely the “principle of funnel”; meaning that the interviewer does not directly start to ask about the most sensitive and central topics, but initiates the conversation with questions that lead to a relaxed atmosphere (Dalen 2004: 30). During the interviews I also reflected upon my role as the research instrument, and tried to interact naturally with the children so they would feel more comfortable. Sometimes we laughed together, they were offered cookies, and we talked about situations that were not directly related to the questions. At the best, such small-talk with the IDP children made the context of the interview resemble a natural conversation and may have helped them to “find their own way through the issue, express things in the sequence they want to follow and use words that they want to use” (Newby 2010: 343).

3.3.2 Tool of analysis

The analysis of the interviews with the children was primarily built on grounded theory tools. First coined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), it has been further developed to include several systematic inductive guidelines for collecting, coding, breaking down, analyzing, and conceptualizing data respectively, in order to construct theoretical concepts that can contribute to explain the data which is collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz 2003; Charmaz 2005). The analysis consists of a thematic analysis of the interview data, which was broken into codes. The extracting of such codes empowers and speeds up the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as well as they function as labels for “assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (1994: 56). During the coding process, various patterns from this interview data were developed and made it possible to suggest relevant existing theoretical concepts, as Yin suggests (1993). Important to mention that the grounded theory approach has been criticised “for its failure to acknowledge implicit theories which guide work at an early stage” (Silverman 2006: 97). The review of concepts relevant to the cases, were explored at the starting point before of the data collection in the study, which I believe prevented such misguidance. It is, however, important to note that

given the qualitative nature of this study I was also open to new ideas and theories as a result of the data analysis.

3.3.3 Document analysis

Complex social phenomena as the IDP students' are a part of a public school in Bogotá can partly be expressed through the content of policy documents (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008). Such a view at the macro level is relevant not only by the means of triangulation and possibly expanding the situation of the IDPs, but also to look at the state's formal efforts to ensure the legal responsibility of the right to education for all. The state is the main provider of distributing documents that express purposes of action within education systems (Scott, 1990). In Colombia, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) is the responsible producer of national educational policies. A weakness of the use of documents is the potential bias it represents. Even if they claim to be authentic, one can question whether they are credible (Scott, 1990). Education policy by the MEN is credible in terms of the goals that they intend to fulfil, but they do only represent the official view of the government and not necessarily that of other stakeholders of Colombian public education, i.e. the students, parents, teachers, school coordinators, etc. Subsequently, its policy expressed in the documents is used to provide a macro perspective of the inclusion process of the IDPs where the analysis has aimed to critically investigate social inequality as it is "expressed, constituted and legitimized by language use" (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 10).

The Revolución Educativa is a policy framework put forth by the presidency of Álvaro Uribe (2002 - 2010), and consists of several policy documents. The RE is not manifested in only one document, but a series of documents made publicly since 2002, also at the MEN's web pages. I will have a look at those who are most central to discuss in the light of the data material. They are available online at MEN's web pages, thus best being categorized as "open-published" documents (Scott 1990: 14). The RE policy framework is chosen because it presents the objectives to how the educational sector ideally shall be transformed in the future.

3.3.4 Tool of analysis

A central activity in document analysis is to find the meaning behind it, and “to interpret and comprehend the evidence the document tells us” (Scott 1990: 6). A useful tool to explore such meanings is the application of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Vavrus & Seghers suggest that such a method predicts that knowledge “is socially constructed and shaped by relations of power that are both material and discursive” (2010: 77). Moreover, CDA is concerned with different analysis of structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, and is linked with critical theory-perspectives of power and critique (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). This kind of document analysis has been used, among other things, to call attention to socially discriminated groups, and provides researchers the ability to shed light on problem-oriented social inequalities around us (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Wodak and Meyer suggest a checklist of four elements a critical document analysis should focus on, which makes up the basis of my document analysis:

Figure 3.2 Elements of a CDA analysis



Source: Wodak & Meyer (2009)

Due to the limited scope of the study, only ideology will be explored in the analysis. Finally, intertextuality as a principle in discourse analysis is applied as an analytical tool in the document analysis. It refers to the extent of how the texts or ideologies in this case, converge or diverge between the policy documents (Van Dijk, 2007).

The sociologist Foucault emphasizes that education is a setting of various discourses that reflects power (1971), and that the system itself is “a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses with the knowledge and power they bring with them” (Foucault 1971: 46). From this point of view, the policies reflect subjective ideologies produced by the government in any state. Since no educational system is neutral, an analysis of the national policy should be considered to contain different forms of critique. The values of the prevailing MEN policies reflect, in this sense, ideologies that are embedded in them. Thus, a methodological consequence of a document analysis of educational discourses on education for IDPs must seek to put forth critical questions of the ideologies manifested in the documents. This is in line with Foucault’s thought, who claims that one should

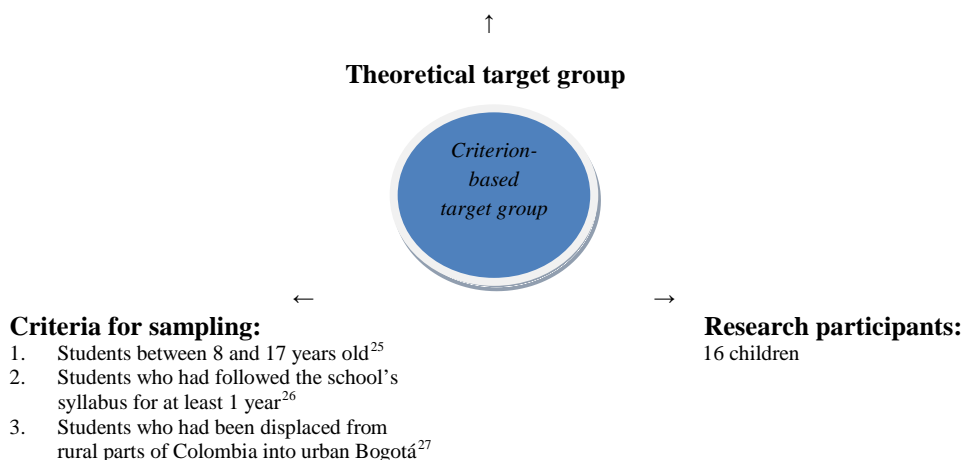
“criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that we can fight fear” (Foucault 1974: 171).

3.4 Sampling

The following section outlines the criteria of the sample of the interview participants, and describes how the sample processes were carried out at the two schools used as cases. The overlying sampling procedure can best be described as intensity sampling, a formula which includes information-rich cases, and provides the researcher with data from a certain phenomenon in an intensively manner (Patton, 2002). IDPs enrolled in the public schools were the intensely investigated phenomenon used to answer the RPs. To search for students in Suba and Usme district a criterion sample was used, which includes a strategy of picking cases which meet the same kinds of criteria (Patton, 2002). Altogether, the target group consisted of 16 children, and were based on three different criteria for participation:

Figure 3.3 *Criterion strategies of the interviews with IDP children at the schools*

All children enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Suba and Usme District schools



Source: Based on Sætersdal (1985), cited in Dalen (2004).

²⁵ Students between 8 and 17 years old: I chose to follow the formal curriculum in Colombia that starts when the students are 5 years old and goes on until they are 17 years old after reaching the 11th grade. Due to the limited time scope of the fieldwork, I considered it unlikely that I would gain trustful relations with the youngest students. The concentration on children who were at least 8 years old I believe would ensure adequately reflections of their own situation and context. Therefore, students from 8 formed up the lowest limit of the age group, while 17 years of age were the oldest.

²⁶ Students who had followed the school's syllabus for at least 1 year: I chose this criterion to ensure that the research participants both had experiences as former IDPs, as well as having gained personal experience at least for one school year.

²⁷ Students displaced from “el campo” into urban Bogotá: This criterion was used so the researcher could better see the cultural aspects of being new in an extraneous learning environment.

3.4.1 Suba

The first interviews took place at the school in Suba. My contact person and I sat down to discuss how we could take care of the children's interest in the pursuit of data. We discussed issues of potential stigma that students might feel if they would have to proclaim their past during their participation in the project. We decided that she would go and speak with students she knew, and return with one and one, depending if he or she agreed upon participation. The first questions were about football and interests they had, and then I slightly moved towards how they experienced the first days at their new school before moving on to more sensitive questions, e.g. whether he or she felt rejected by their companions at school and so on. Toward the end, I "opened up the funnel" (Dalen 2004: 30) by asking what he or she wanted to study in the future, as well as asking for advice they might had for other IDPs in the same situation (See Appendix A). The latter question contributed to a situation where they were considered as important agents with resources other students would benefit from their own knowledge. The body language and the length of the answers showed that they did appreciate such an invitation.

3.4.2 Usme

The IDP students in the case of Usme constituted the majority of the students, and made it possible to bring out a purposeful random sampling, a strategy that added credibility to the data collection process (Patton, 2002). In collaboration with the teachers, we randomly asked chosen among the IDP students as they ran through the schoolyard. Most of the children were eager to participate. A weakness of this strategy, however, was that it might exclude potential participants rich with information among the students that might have had interesting and relevant views on the topic.

3.5 Quality

The quality of any research project can be measured in different ways. From a positivist point of view, validity and reliability are generally based on numerical and statistical measures of quality. While validity and reliability respectively are defined as the usefulness of "inferences made from test scores and the degree these "are free from errors of measurement" (APA 1995: 9, 19), researchers have more recently argued for another paradigm, whereby trustworthiness is considered as a sound framework to consider quality within social research. It can be

defined as the way of persuading the audience of the study that it is worth taking account of (Guba & Lincoln, 1995). Guba and Lincoln operationalize trustworthiness into credibility, dependability, and confirmability respectively. In the following, these activities form up the criteria of the quality of this study.²⁸

3.5.1 Credibility

The credibility concept is to “carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced and to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied” (Lincoln & Guba 1985: 296). The research was done with direct conversations with actors from the social setting intended for investigation; namely students that had been internally displaced to Bogotá from *el campo*.²⁹ The carrying out of interviews with them, added to the credibility in terms of the relevance of research site and participants. In addition, Spanish was spoken with the research participants, a form of communication strategy that likely increased the credibility because of enhancement of the direct communication as well as interaction between the students and the researcher. In terms of approving the findings with the research participants, or ‘constructors of the multiple realities’ as Lincoln and Guba point out, a report will be sent to both schools used as cases as well as to central staff at MEN. Janesick calls such a practice “member-checking”, and advocates that the researcher “needs to find a way to allow for the participants to review the material one way or another” (Janesick 2003: 69).

3.5.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research provides other researchers the ability to convey findings from the context into another one. To make this possible, the researcher must provide sufficient descriptive data to secure that other researchers can make similar judgements about the context of this research at a later occasion. As one can see, the responsibility of transferability also lies with the researcher who intends to transfer the findings to his own

²⁸ The equivalent concepts of judging quality of document analysis is slightly different, and consist of four elements; convergence, agreement, coverage, and linguistic details (Wodak & Krzyzanovski, 2008; Gee, 1999). Convergence is enhanced if the answers are convincing in relation to the analysis, agreement is enhanced if the policy maker at MEN agree upon the analysis and if other CDA analysts accept the tools of the conducted DA, coverage is enhanced if the analysis provides prediction of what might happen in related contexts, and finally, linguistic details in terms of relevant words/sentences from the documents’ texts and argumentation of the use of them (Gee 1992: 92).

²⁹ The notion refers to the rural districts of Colombia.

context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), in contrast to the question of credibility.³⁰ Finally, Lincoln and Guba's criterion of transferability demand that the raw data shall be available to others. To meet such a demand, I have digitally preserved the files for later use by other researchers who have gotten permission to do research in transferable contexts. One can ask if this preserving decreases the confidentiality because the identities of the research participants become visible to other researchers. To avoid this risk, all names were erased from the files, as well as the dates attached to them.

3.5.3 Dependability

To increase the dependability of a research, one can take into account both “factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change” (Lincoln & Guba 1985: 299). Instability factors were for instance errors that appeared during the transcription process from talk to text. An instability factor was the fact that Spanish is not the mother tongue of the researcher, and cultural-dependent expressions or unclear words could have fallen through during the process. To hold back language-related instabilities, meanings words and phrases were discussed with student colleagues at the National University of Colombia. Another issue of dependability involves the research questions and whether they appear as clear and understandable to the research participants. This issue can be judged by the audience through examining the interview guide (see Appendix A). Furthermore, the use of peer reviewing probably increased the extent of dependability, by regularly consulting peers at the master programme (CIE) and also my adviser. Finally, the research questions are adjusted a few times during the research process, and do likely boast a closer relationship with the case that is investigated and the belonging social issues of IDPs in the school system. The findings are presented and discussed thematically to provide a sense of transparency as they are discussed in the light of the theoretical concepts. This might as well also have contributed to a more consistent meaningfulness between the findings in relation to the data sources, suggested to be a highly relevant issue of dependability (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

³⁰ For instance the original researcher's impracticability of knowing the site to which the findings would be transferred.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent research participants are taking part in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research participants - manifested by the students that participated in the interviews - were actively taking part in the research process when the interviews were carried out. In terms of the content of the interview guide they played a part in the construction of the questions as the interview guide was only used to generate topics and the research was thus able to also “go with the flow” of the conversation. Each interview ended with a listening section, whereby those who wanted could listen through the whole recorded interview, and at the same time they had the chance to erase the whole conversation or cancel parts of it. This was a popular choice, and almost everyone wanted to listen to the interview afterwards. Furthermore, the participants were at the end asked whether they thought any question was unsuitable, too aggressive, or inappropriate. On two occasions the questions were changed to be more pertinent. In regard to participation in the process at the later stages of the research, no further - at least directly - participation has been possible. The distance from Norway to Colombia made it challenging to ensure further participation with those who took part of the research process during the field work. However, the results will be fed back to both schools used as cases as well as to the MEN, after submission and endorsement of the study. In spite of Miles & Huberman’s statement that such a practice of feeding findings back to informants is considered to be “venerated, but not always executed” (1994: 275). It is, nevertheless, an intention and an obligation of the researcher which will be highly prioritized after submission.

3.5.5 Ethical issues

Ethics in academic research involves both metaethical and applied ethical thinking (Benn, 2005), making the latter most relevant in this study. Ethical considerations in research are considered fundamentals as quality parameters in research (Allen, 2005). One can claim that reflections upon what possible implications our choices will have, are reducing the possibility to do harm to the research participants (Bryman, 2008). Including children as research participants inflicts a range of ethical issues in addition to the basic ethical code of conduct; the more attention one pays to the ethical questions a research raises, the more considerations one must take (Vestby, 1999). Research with children as participants has to assure that they are protected in different ways, such as adjusted methods and content of research in regard to

age and social situation (Backe-Hansen, 2009). The scope of this chapter limits the possibility to go in-depth on every ethical issue which was confronted, but five of the most emergent issues that challenged the ethical quality of the study are outlined in the following sub-sections.

Harm to participants

A phenomenon that often occurred at the end of the interview was the research participants' expressed contentment with the participation. On several occasions the interviewees said it was a relief to talk about their situation, and to know that other students at their school were former displaced children like themselves. Knowing that the students perceived the participation as a positive outcome reduced the potential harm of participating, as well as it contributed to an empowerment of the participants well-being, all factors that can be expected as strength in any research.

Informed consent

Informed consent is one of the most important principles of social science research. The principle refers to "receiving consent by the respondent after having carefully and truthfully informed him or her about the research" (Fontana & Frey 2005: 715). To ensure a fully informed consent, the contact persons at the schools in the Suba and Usme districts explained thoroughly the principle of confidentiality, and that the children could leave the interview whenever they felt like it. Furthermore, they were ensured that anonymity would be taken care of. After a reciprocal understanding that the interview was completely voluntary and that it could start, the informed consent was considered to have been reached. Even if letters of confidentiality were made, it was soon realized that such a letter seemed irrelevant for the students at the participants' ages (8-17). The central aspects of confidentiality and informed consent were repeated at the end, such as the background of the study, that it was voluntary, that their right to privacy was taken care of, how and where the results would be distributed, and that he or she could discontinue their participation whenever they wanted. Explaining the principle of informed consent by their contact teachers, and repeated by the researcher, ensured adequate information about this principle. At the end, all participants received a small optional gift of interest for their participation.

The right to privacy

The right to privacy means that the researcher has a duty “to protect the identity of the interviewees” (Fontana & Frey 2005: 715). The data analysis and the presentation of their stories were done with a changing of all the names of the participants. However, the principle of right to privacy was more problematic in the field because other students noticed when the participants returned to the classroom after being interviewed. This caused risk for identification that they were internally displaced students. Informal conversations with the students at the end of the fieldwork, showed that other students had not “become suspicious” of why they had been interviewed. On one occasion a student did not know that anyone knew her IDP status, and found it strange that the teacher asked her if she wanted to participate. The incident could be categorized as an invasion of privacy from her perspective if she wanted to remain completely anonymous. On the other hand, none of the other students realized that she had an identity as ‘an IDP’.

Research in conflict zones

Colombia is defined as a conflict zone, regarding the fact that guerrilla activities and government forces are continuously fighting in several parts of the country, and that in between two and four million civilians have been forced to flee from their homes (Mackinlay 1999: Save the Children 2006). Even if the fieldwork was not carried out directly in a conflict zone where paramilitaries and guerrilla groups were fighting, my research participants were in any case a part of the armed conflict in other ways. The results and analysis of the data will hopefully gain the IDPs at the schools used as cases in one way or another, depending on the school coordinators’ acknowledgement of the findings and the willingness to alterations at the schools. Another feature of doing research in a conflict zone, Goodhand suggests, is to be “open to opportunities to do some good” (Goodhand 2008: 14). “To do some good” can be interpreted in many ways, and it remains to each researcher to adopt actions to contribute positively. It may not be excluded the fact that being interested about other children’s issues and everyday life can have a positive impact, e.g. as described above, albeit these positive effects are likely not being possible to measure effectively.

Research with indigenous people

The various research participants among the students at the schools represented different ethnocultural groups as indigenous people, afro-descendants, and mestizos.³¹ Ball points out that doing research with ethnocultural groups is linked to a perspective of social justice (Ball, 2005). He suggests that voices of indigenous groups, for instance, should be integrated in research to restore a social justice in the academic world, and to acknowledge that we are members of a dominant culture in the position of power. He emphasizes the importance of focusing on ethnocultural groups:

“The potential to oppress and exploit indigenous people is a matter of concern, and deliberate efforts should be made to level the playing field in negotiating research relationships” (Ball 2005: 82).

I consider the focus of indigenous groups to be applicable to all ethnocultural groups, thus a perspective of social justice is a part of the study.

3.6 Materials

Throughout the interview process an interview guide customized for open-ended interviews with the IDP students (Appendix A) was used, constructed with an open-ended design because of the possibility of touching upon certain topics of interest whereas the participants freely could move on to issues that emerged as important for them. Additionally, a notebook was brought along - and presumably a researcher's most important tool for data collection - a tape recorder - was diligently utilized to all interviews and informal conversations. In any occasion where I conducted interviews, contacted or visited organizations and educational settings, a research letter provided by the research institution³² was also carried along (Appendix C).

³¹ I.e. a person of mixed biological heritage. In Latin America it is referred to a person of combined Indian and European extraction (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010).

³² Institute of Educational Research, University of Oslo, Norway.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has described and discussed the methodological choices made during the fieldwork. Design, access and sampling strategies have been outlined. Moreover, the research methods used have been presented, i.e. open-ended interviews and CDA analysis. Strengths and weaknesses following these choices have been discussed, as well as trustworthiness and activities of quality in social research. Finally, ethical issues in relation to research with children are explored, including the researcher's role in conflict zones and the issue of doing research with ethnocultural people. The next chapter presents theoretical concepts that have been useful to explain the findings from the data material.

4 Theoretical framework

All research is in some way based on a theoretical framework, either explicitly or implicitly. Theories are ideas that help us “exploring and interpreting the social world around us” (Coffey & Atkinson 1996: 157). They describe realities, are used to develop new ideas (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) and guide the researcher to social spheres with questions and strategies for exploring those (Kincheloe & MacLaren, 2003). In qualitative research a theory is often derived as a result of an analysis of data (Newby, 2010), in opposition of quantitative approaches that rather test theories instead of building them. Consequently, empirical findings from social spheres have the possibility to “formulate, modify and even reject already existing concepts” (Coffey & Atkinson 1996: 158). The concepts that have been found relevant to discuss the findings are first and foremost Goffman’s concept of stigma (1963) used to interpret the IDP students’ experiences the first period after enrolment into the public education system. His framework is useful in the study because it explores the moments when “stigmatized and normal are in the same social situation” (Goffman 1963: 12). IDPs who have moved into urban Bogotá from different rural parts of Colombia often experience different kinds of labelling and stereotyping from ordinary students. Hence, stigma as an explanatory concept of the students’ reality has been useful to understand processes of discrimination when someone deviates from what the majority of the people consider as normal. Link and Phelan (2001) draw on Goffman (1963), and have developed a theoretical framework on various elements a stigmatization process entails. Their theoretical concept will also be applied as a supplement to understand the findings. Besides, family, teachers, and peers seemed to play a considerable important role for the adaptation of the IDPs, thus analyzing their narratives in the light of various social systems are therefore relevant. The ecological social system (EST) has been considered to be an applicable approach by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to understand the interrelational processes which took place at the two schools used as cases. As a part of the EST framework, Farrell’s concepts on inequality are applied to understand the management of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it emerged as a problematic subject for the IDP students. Farrell’s angle on equality is used to explain more equivocal aspects of the children’s experiences. The latter concepts are best categorized as middle-range theories, i.e. ideas that focus on specific social phenomena (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). All together, the variety of theoretical conceptions has contributed to give a holistic overview of how IDPs experience the school system in Colombia.

4.1 Stigma

The case study revealed clear patterns of fear of rejection on behalf of the IDP student. The risk of revealing their social background as displaced people showed a reluctance of situations where this could happen. Such reluctance can make people disengaging from social spheres because they consider the participation as a constant threat (Chryssochoou, 2004). One can also claim that members of devalued groups - if we consider IDPs as such - who are aware of negative stereotypes associated with their social identity, will underperform in the educational system in the attempt “to protect themselves from stereotype threat and possible rejection by disengaging from school and academic performance” (Chryssochoou 2004: 22). Measuring underperformance is not an objective of the case study, but the protection that manifested itself among students particularly at one of the school cases was interesting; many of the IDP students had strategies to deal with the rejection of the other students. In addition, the data showed that some of the “normal”³³ students had stereotypes against the IDP students in the findings. Therefore, illuminating the IDP students’ experiences in the light of theories of rejection, stereotyping, and social identity is highly relevant. Finally, the stigma approach is useful because it explains social interactions between groups and individuals where people intend to control what kind of information about themselves that shall be given to others around them (Goffman, 1963); a practice that has its sounding board among the students at one of the case schools.

The concept of stigma, Goffman (1963) argues, can be differentiated into three groups; physical attributes, individual characteristics, and types of ethnocultural characteristics respectively. What they have in common is that there is an individual

“who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse [and] possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us. He possesses a stigma, an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated” (Goffman 1963: 5).

A behaviour that is likely to happen among other people in the context of such social situations where individuals “possesses a trait”, is the shaping of an idea that the person with the stigma “is not quite human” (Goffman 1963: 5). Practically, various forms of

³³ The concept of “normal” is highly debated, and is difficult to define because it may likely vary through different social contexts. In the forthcoming use of the word I decide to use Goffman’s understanding of the notion normal: “People who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue” (Goffman 1963: 5).

discrimination start to manifest themselves, resulting in a minimizing of the individuals' life chances (Goffman, 1963).

4.1.1 Stereotypes and discrimination

When a stereotype is incongruous with those stereotypes the majority has of what a given type of individual would be (Goffman, 1963), stigmatization appears. Peoples' expectations of how a person would be, and what characteristics or qualities he or she has, form up a "virtual social identity". On the other hand we have got a person's "actual social identity"; i.e. the person's real characteristics and qualities. If a person holds an attribute that makes him or her different from others, a discrepancy between the virtual and the actual social identity becomes apparent. If the majority sees this attribute as incongruous with their stereotypes of how a given type of individual should be, it stigmatizes the individual (Goffman, 1963). The people react on the attribute, followed by a perception of the attribute as a deviance, and the person becomes a subject of discrimination. Goffman argues that such discrimination by the majority leads to "a reducing of life chances of the exposed individuals" (1963: 5). The individual's abilities and characteristics get reduced and misjudged, and the person gets his or her real personal identity blurred because of the other people's tendency to reduce him/her. Ironically, this form of reducing is based exclusively on the individuals' virtual social identity; accordingly this individual loses their "life chances" on a misleading foundation. Goffman (1963) does not take into consideration how the "reducing of life chances" takes place, but it is reasonable to think that the forms of reducing vary according to contexts, type of stigma, individual's age, and other visible and invisible factors. The extent of discrimination depends on the expectations of people around the person:

"An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself" (Goffman 1963: 3).

Hence, the potential of whether an attribute is considered a stigma is closely related to stereotypes which the social environment has. Stereotypes differ from contexts, but some patterns are relatively equally.

4.1.2 Patterns of stigmatization

Link and Phelan (2001) provide an understanding of how stereotypes of other people are put in practice, what patterns which emerge, as well as how stigmatization unfold in social contexts. This perspective is relevant to the schools used as cases because of the tendencies of various types of stigmatization. Therefore, a short description of their understanding is outlined. They suggest that a stigma appears when there is a convergence between five different elements:

“Stigma exists when elements of labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows the components of stigma to unfold” (Link & Phelan 2001: 377).

When these elements converge, an idea of stigma is created in the social setting. According to Link and Phelan, differences which once are labelled, are often taken for granted as truths (2001: 367). Such categorizations are not easy to change. Oversimplifications of various groups in the society tend to ignore numerous variability within the groups, simply because there will always be many variations between the individuals in all groups (Link & Phelan, 2001). Compared to Goffman’s (1963) use of “attribute” to describe the visible or invisible causes of stigma, Link and Phelan (2001) introduce the word “label”. If people are labelled as different, they may create an own category whereby themselves are the members. A group consisting of relationships with the particular stigma is created, whose membership of the group is constituted by their common category and “by virtue of this are defined and define themselves as his own kind” (Goffman 1963: 28). The creation of such a group becomes ecologically consolidated, meaning that the group members support “agents and agencies who represent them” (Goffman 1963: 24). One of the outcomes of such ecologically consolidated groups is establishments of friendships among the stigmatized (1963).

Another component of stigmatization is the creation of negative associations of differences people have. When people hear a characteristic, e.g. “desplazada”,³⁴ they do automatically associate that with negative attributes. Link and Phelan suggest such associations are cognitive-based, and that associations appear pre-consciously (2001: 369). This component, however, seems to be dependent on a former oversimplification or labelling of the given groups. Separation, on the other hand, occurs when people make distinctions between “us” and “them”. Such a separation does frequently appear within the discourse of immigration;

³⁴ A category used by the IDP students themselves and other people when describing the victims of the forced displacement.

original inhabitants separate clearly themselves as “we”, and divide the rest of the inhabitants from foreign countries as “them” (Link & Phelan, 2001). Both labelling and stereotyping construct a belief that people which one do not know are different and belong to a markedly different group of human beings (Link & Phelan, 2001).

The consequences of the stigmatization patterns as mentioned above, i.e. labelling, stereotyping, and separation, are various forms of status loss and discrimination. Link and Phelan claim that people who are being “labelled, set apart, and linked to undesirable characteristics, a rationale is constructed for devaluing, rejecting, and excluding them” (Link & Phelan 2001: 370-371). The loss of status happens when the undesirable characteristics put forth by the ‘normal’ person reduces the stigmatized person. Discrimination can be divided into both individual and structural, whereby the former is most relevant to this study. Individual discrimination, Link and Phelan argue, occur when a person’s attitudes and beliefs lead to overt forms of rejection, harassment, etc (2001).

4.1.3 Control of information and passing

Also a kind of precariousness emerges in the social clash between a normal and a person who has attributes or characteristics which are different from what other people expect. When ‘normals’ and stigmatized persons meet, the latter is socially uncomfortable with the fact that he or she cannot know what is the attitude on his stigma by the normals (Goffman, 1963). The outcome is often two-fold; the person with a stigma can either fall into the category of a “discredited” or a “discreditable” person. The first condition means that the person takes for granted that his stigma is known among the “normals”, while being discreditable he or she believes that the “normals” do not know about the stigma (Goffman, 1963). The differences between these two conditions are manifested by the use of information, a phenomenon that is likely to occur with the individuals who thinks noone knows about his social identity (Goffman 1963: 42). In other words, a person who wishes to prevent others to know about information that can lead to stigmatization is likely to control what information that is coming out to normal people. Goffman calls this process as “the management of undisclosed discrediting information about self” (Goffman 1963: 42). A technique for managing information about oneself which is discrediting, or is harming the reputation of the individual, is “passing”. It includes that information is disclosed by the individual, and that they are presenting themselves falsely in given situations (Goffman, 1963). Because being considered

normal is rewarded by many people, such passing will often be preferred. For instance, when IDP students socialize with others, things about their past may not be concealed to the rest.

4.1.4 Stigmatization of internally displaced

While Goffman (1963) seeks to explain stigma at a general level, Thalayasingam finds a particular pattern of displacement among internally displaced (2006). Drawing on research from his Sri Lankan case study, he claims that stigmatization is common among people who have been internally displaced, and advocates that there are three factors that determine whether an IDP moves away from the stigma which is associated with the person:

Figure 4.1 Displacement: Factors that decide the path from stigma to normalcy



Source: Thalayasingam (2006: 18)

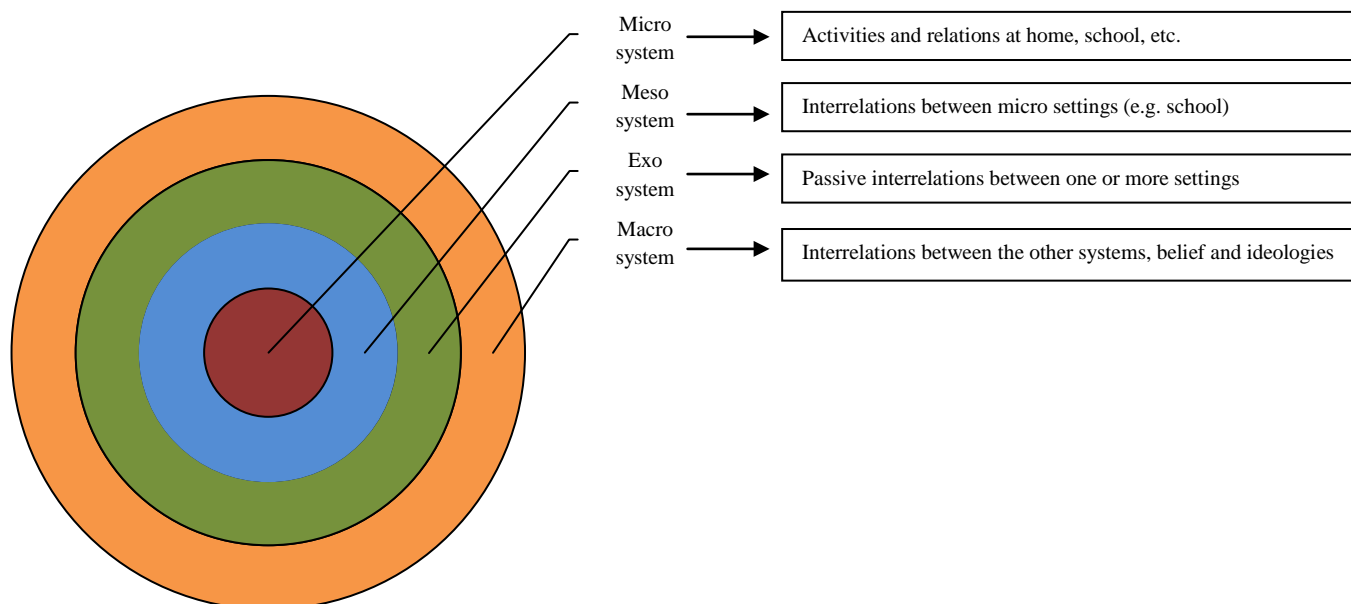
Firstly, the passage of time is one of the factors that affect how an IDP both deals with his social identity and how normal students deal with it. In relation to my study, the research participants had all studied one year or more in Bogotá, thus already having passed a relatively long time in the new contexts at the schools. Secondly, how children cope in events of displacement is also considered essential, and will be further explained in another sequence (4.2.1). Thirdly, whether the IDP moves on to a state of normalcy depends on how he or she adapts to the new situation after the incident of displacement (Thalayasingam, 2006).

Viewpoints on the stigmatization process have now been outlined, including how social deviances lead to discrimination between groups and individuals and how labelling of people because of stereotypes unfold a further stigmatization. In contrary to exclusive processes as stigmatization, the findings did also reveal strengthening social mechanisms within the IDP students' context. Family, teachers, and peers, as well as the influence of time are examples of such factors. The forthcoming part outlines a theoretical framework that seeks to explain some of these social mechanisms relevant to the findings.

4.2 The Ecological System's Theory

As the IDPs enrol into the public education system, various social actors are influencing them, to the worse or to the better. But, as Elkin (1963) emphasizes, not all people “have an equal influence on the child”. In order to explain how the social environment of the IDP students influences them, Bronfenbrenner’s theory on how the child takes part in and develops within “environmental interconnections and their impact on the forces directly affecting psychological growth” is explored (1979: 8). He argues the importance of including an ecological system to understand human development processes children go through (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), in order to better understand “the complex setting and differentiate it from the more common developmental context of family and home” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 132). Thus, his theoretical framework of the Ecological System Theory (EST) is relevant in order to analyze the social processes which take place after arrival and through the continuation as students in the two urban schools in Bogotá. Below, the EST model is simplified.

Figure 4.2 *The Ecological System Theory*



Source: Based on Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1994)

Bronfenbrenner proposes five different structures or systems of how social interaction and children's social development takes places in the environment. These are the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and the chrono system (1986). The first system which will be described, personal abilities as an own part of the EST framework due to its applicability based on the findings. Hence, it is not presented as an original part of Bronfenbrenner's approach, but has emerged as a part of the ecology after taking account of the findings with the research participants.

4.2.1 The onto system

Osofsky (1999) advocates that a child's own internal resources are factors that determine how he or she manages parts of the everyday life. Terrisse (2000) equals internal resources within the concept of resilience, and suggests the concept to be a part of the EST, named as the onto system. As such, the students' own resources in dealing with their displacement situation can be understood as an ontosystemic factor in their social development after the event of displacement.

Children that have experienced loss of close family members and friends and witnessed different types of violence experience various types of trauma because of the stress associated with these circumstances and happenings (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Punamäki et al 2001). Despite such negative experiences many children in various contexts seem to cope effectively in the everyday life. One of the reasons can be personal creative abilities, which is argued to develop resilience among war-affected children (Aguilar & Retamal, 2009). Such abilities can be expressed through writing their own feelings and histories, singing songs, and playing. Subsequently, it is useful to understand personal qualities IDP students had in place, within such a sub-system.

Resilience is defined as "the quality or fact of being able to recover quickly or easily from, or resist being affected by, a misfortune, shock, or illness" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010), and is considered to lead to robustness and adaptability. The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the process of adapting well in spite of facing negative incidents or considerable stressful events (APA, 1995).

4.2.2 The micro system

Since the study aimed at providing empirical knowledge of how IDPs are included in the public educational system after events of displacement it has been crucial to listen to what they would tell. In this regard, the micro system fits well as a theoretical framework because experiences of the persons within certain contexts are central (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The theoretical approach of the EST assumes that

“very few of the external influences significantly affecting human behaviour and development can be described solely in terms of objective physical conditions and events (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22).

The factors which are most important for the growth of a person are those “that have meaning to the person in a given situation” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22). The micro system consists of various settings where direct interactions take place and where people engage in the context of close relationships. In Bronfenbrenner’s terminology this system is a pattern of

“activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22).

The activities, roles, and interpersonal relations are all different “building blocks of the micro system” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22), and are constructed in different social settings where the interpersonal relations develop with each other. Examples of a setting can be the home, school, or other places where children interact socially, e.g. within the peer group, workplace, etc (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Bronfenbrenner 1994). The most important of these relationships, Bronfenbrenner (1979) advocates, are those who the child finds important in a given situation. The family is the main context where such important relations take place (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), but the school as well is a setting considered to be within the micro system (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), and was also the setting which was researched in this study. Teachers and peers can also be important elements of the students’ development, but the impact of these interrelations depends on the structure and content of the micro system (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). One of these structures are molar activities, and are recognized as behaviour between people that create meaning for the participants in a given setting, for instance at the school or in the home (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). If the behaviour of one of the persons in the setting does not involve intentions, such behaviour does only have “negligible impact (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 45).

4.2.3 The meso system

While the micro system includes the child's social relations in settings as the home, school or other places, the meso system makes up the interrelational aspect between home and school, to mention the most relevant to this study. It is defined as a system that "comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates" (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 25). Such an interrelation is between the IDP students' homes and the schools where they are enrolled, and forms "a system of micro systems" (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). This part of the theory was not specifically clear in the data; hence, it will not be focusing further on this system.

4.2.4 The exo system

The exo system explains the context that affects children in indirect and abstract ways, such as culture, religion, and society, and refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 25). The cultural context at the school in Suba and the one in Usme is a part of the exo system. Religious expressions and specific characteristics of the society at the schools are also examples of such contexts that affect children. The important role peers and teachers have can also be explained in such a cultural context.

Mead (1978) finds that there are different levels of peer influence in the development process of children based on the type of culture the people live within. Colombia displays a varied cultural adversity, and is difficult to categorize as a one-cultural country. If we look at the cultural context at the schools, it can best be understood in light of both a configurative and a prefigurative culture. The former culture is distinguished by a socialization of the children by the adults, as well as a medium role of the peers' influence of the socialization process. The latter is similar to a culture with rapid change, the children use the major time at the schools, and the main interactional activities happen between the student, the peers, and the teachers (Mead, 1979). The relevance of the parents is high for some of the students, while the importance of peers and teachers is equally high for others at the two schools. However, it is beyond the scope of the study to look at each IDP student's cultural background in order to assess what culture the schools can be said to contain.

4.2.5 The macro system

The idea behind the macro system is that one system forms an “overarching pattern of micro, meso, and exo systems in a culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Thus, the system is more abstract than the former systems, and do not involve relations or happenings around the child’s context. Bronfenbrenner defines it as

“various consistencies in both form and content of the micro, meso, and exo systems, that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 26).

In addition to belief systems and ideologies, there are a range of non-tangible consistencies of the macro system, such as how knowledge is organized, customs and life-styles, structures of opportunities, and so forth, which are all “embedded in each of these broader systems” (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). These consistencies affect the social processes which take place at the micro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In other words, being aware of the way in which policies affect children’s development is advantageous to know what policies that would be useful in favour of the children’s development (Bronfenbrenner 1986: 738). The Colombian government has until the current year favoured neoliberal policies, manifested itself in Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2006-2010 (PND), where the education system is seen as a method to meet the demands that a globalized society entails. The PND emphasizes that the educational processes have a key role in making people competitive and effective for adaptation to new economic realities and to transform the challenge of globalization (PND 2006: 45). In Carnoy’s words, “globalization enters the education sector on an ideological horse, and its effects on education are largely a product of that financially driven, free-market ideology” (Carnoy 2000: 49). One of the main effects of globalization in education, Carnoy claims, is the decentralization of the education system (2000), last exemplified through the government’s suggestion to privatize all public higher education institutions (Fieldnotes: 20.10.2009). In order to understand the influences of the macro system, a critical theory-approach can be applied because of its dealing with various issues as justice, race, ideologies, and finally; education. Such issues, Kincheloe & McLaren claim, “construct a social system” (2003: 437), based on the prevailing ideology in the given society. In the context of the study, the acquisition of communication skills in English is stated as crucial by the Colombian government to meet the demands that follows in the wake of the globalization (MEN, 2006a), and forms the ideological context of the analysis.

Moreover, a critical-theory perspective contributes to an identification of who are gaining and who are losing in specific social situations where underprivileged groups are represented (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003); which can be said to be the situation of the IDP students in public schools to where they have been displaced. As was mentioned earlier, the national educational policies are tied up with equality to survival and outcome in order to understand better how Colombia's education policy strengthens or weakens the IDP students' adaptation processes into the new schools after the displacement. Hence, views on equality are presented in the following.

In the description of the Colombian context, we looked at how inequality exists in the education system. Considering the high drop-out numbers in Latin-American schools in general, included in Colombian schools, it is useful to view schooling as a long-term process. In this sense, there will be different points during the line of formal schooling where children may or may not drop out. Farrell's (1992) model on different facets of equality public education is therefore relevant to consider the extent of equality in the two schools used as cases. The model is briefly outlined below.

Figure 4.3 *Equalities in the formal education system*

Equality of survival	Equality of output
<i>The probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle.</i>	<i>The probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same level at a defined point in the school system.</i>
Equality of access	Equality of outcome
The probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system.	The probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling.

Source: Farrell 1992: 111-112 (1992)

4.2.6 The chrono system

The chrono system is the final type of system elaborated by Bronfenbrenner and describes the influence of time on the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), and how the effects of the child is influenced by these. Since the data collection did not take place during enough time to see the time influences clearly, this system has not been paid more attention in the analysis.

4.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the two central theoretical concepts used in the study, i.e. Goffman's concept of stigma, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system's theory. The latter theory is proven applicable to the data especially in regard to the micro and macro system, and has for that reason been emphasized more than the other systems; namely the meso, exo, and chrono system. An additional level, the onto system, is included in the framework because of an increased applicability of the theory. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings in the light of Goffman's concept on stigma and Bronfenbrenner's framework of EST.

5 Results and analysis

This chapter represents and discusses the findings from the interviews with the children from the school in Suba and the school in the Usme district. Representatives from the two schools in each district are chosen to enlighten various aspects of the IDP integration process in the Colombian education system. By comparing different data I will attempt to show similarities and differences by highlighting quotes from their stories. The presentation of the data was thematic (Riessman, 1993), focusing on the topics that emerged in the wake of the IDP students' experiences. Organized and put together thematically, contrasting and compared, the chapter seeks to provide an understanding of students' adaptation processes in the urban public education system which is trustworthy to the cases of inquiry. As mentioned in the previous chapter, empirical findings from social realities may modify existing concepts in the field (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). However, there has not been a subtle and pure theorizing in this study, but rather a dialogue between the supposed initial concepts and the findings from the field who affect each other in an altering ambient.

5.1 Discrimination at Suba: A consequence of stigma

The following discussion of the findings focuses on the discrimination the students experienced during the first period when they came to the schools in Bogotá. Goffman's (1963) conceptual framework of stigma calls such discrimination as responses people make when a stigma becomes apparent where it is not accepted as normal. Thus, social identity, namely being a former displaced person, results in various forms of negative reactions towards these IDP students. The experiences of the students and the attitudes of their classmates seemed to depend on whether the IDP students constituted the majority in the school or not.

5.1.1 Discrimination

During the fieldwork in Suba, I got an impression early on that the IDPs perceived their social identity as difficult to reveal to their peers and companions. One of the students was aware of possible discrimination from his peer group:

“Since we were kids we have learned a lot from our parents to understand the situation of displacement we are in and that it was difficult for one to come displaced from *el campo*.³⁵ We learned that discrimination happens. In most of the schools there is discrimination where they reject the students” (Interview: Danny, Suba, 11/04/09).

The most critical period in terms of discrimination by the classmates can be said to take place in the initial period after arrival. Several students expressed that they had experienced “groserías”.³⁶ One of the students who had already been at the school in Suba for one year says that her peers were mean to her in the beginning; they started to laugh, saying dirty things, and treating her badly (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/2009). She attributed their behaviour as being acts of fear and that she would beat them. One might wonder if her classmates would see the situation in the same light. However, given the inability of being able to follow this up, this did not become a question in my mind until after the data analysis, one can only speculate. Other students experienced similar occurrences, e.g. another research participant at the school in Suba. She told about the first period after arrival as rough and uninviting:

“Everyone was looking strange at me; they stared at me like I was a bug” (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09).

In relation to Goffman, people can have a tendency to believe that a person with a stigma is not quite human (Goffman, 1963). One may wonder if they perceived her as a displaced person, which could in turn “reduce her life chances” (Goffman 1963: 5). This means that the students devalued her to not being a “normal” student. The consequence, in Goffman’s (1963) terminology, is that she becomes a spoiled student in the eyes of the “normal” students. If we follow this line of thought, the students around this interview participant can be seen as constructing an ideology to explain the inferiority and account for the danger she represents to them (Goffman, 1963). In this sense, the practical outcome was to label her as a bug, a characteristic which is unarguably without human character. Another research participant did experience such a reduction of her as a person as well, but this story shows a devaluing of her personal capabilities. The outcome is an offensive rejection:

“Sometimes the children said that I could not play because I did not run fast enough. When we did activities and made groups, often I was the only person that stayed

³⁵ Spanish: ‘El campo’ refers to the rural districts of the country, and will hereafter be used when this description is used by the research participants.

³⁶ Spanish: ‘Grosería’ is a frequently used description by many research participants when describing the first period at school after school arrival. It is equivalent to someone being mean or rudeness.

without anyone and the last person who ended up without any group. It was because they did not like to play with me, nor stay with me in other ways” (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/09).

We cannot know whether such undermining of this IDP student’s abilities was based on her social status as an IDP or just the fact that maybe she was simply not good at sports.

However, her story does not rule out the possibility of a discriminatory practice by her peers and her IDP status could also contribute to her not being chosen to be a part of the group.

Rejection is, as Link and Phelan (2001) suggest, a practical indicator of discrimination.

Another student explains that she experienced rejection from her classmates at another school in Bogotá before arrival at the one in Suba:

“I went to another school before this one, and the children asked me why I was displaced. They wanted me to go to another spot. Some of the other children were displaced as well and I started to stay with them as they accepted me. Here the people are nice, and they accept me” (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09).

The rejection of the research participant at the former school in Bogotá is attributed to her social status as a *desplazada*. Her social identity as a displaced was already known about, which according to Goffman means that she would “assume her differentness is known about already or is evident on the spot” (1963: 4). The other side of her experiences is her willingness to seek out and stay with other social groups whose members belong to the same category; in this case other IDP students. This is a common behaviour of people who belong to a particular stigma category (Goffman, 1963). Individuals who are in the same category have, in line with Goffman’s view, tendencies “to come together into small social groups whose members all derive from the category” (1963: 23). In the wake of the creation of such groups of IDP students, social benefits as establishments of friendships turn up. At its best, such an IDP student community could lead to a sense of contentment for some of the IDP students. When such an acceptance among other IDP students happens, a common social identity lies behind the group’s formation. In Goffman’s words, they become *ecologically consolidated* (Goffman 1963: 24). In contrast to the other students at the school, the other IDP students accepted her and eventually started to stay with them. The other displaced students at the school supported her as an “agent who represented them” (Goffman 1963: 24). The creation of the group was not necessarily created because the students represented the same ethnocultural groups, but may also have happened because they shared the same social identity as IDPs.

5.1.2 Information control and passing

As shown above, various forms of discrimination appear after arrival to the schools. Although there is a sense of acceptance from the “normal” students, several IDP students advise other children to not disclose their social identity when arriving at a new school after displacement:

“Children who have been displaced should not say anything to anyone about their identity. They should adapt to the others so the other students do not suspect them for being displaced. If they do not disclose their identity and adapt to the new social environment the other children will not look bad at the displaced, nor reject them” (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09).

As we can see, it appears that the IDP students express a certain level of fear of letting anyone know about their past as displaced persons. The student above is frightened to be suspected of being displaced and rejected, and justifies the disclosure to adapting better to the social environment. Consequently, one of the IDP students makes up excuses after enrolment in the school:

“When I came to this school the students approached me and asked me where I came from. I just answered that “my mom came here to search for labour” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

This student did not want to disclose his status of being displaced and hid the incident of displacement to his peers. It could have been because of fear of rejection as Renée advocated earlier (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09), but also because he wishes to be considered “normal”. Cameron is aware of the possibility of acceptance by the other students if they would believe he was not an IDP (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09), and believed, in contrast to those who assumed that their peers already knew their social identity as IDPs, that by hiding his identity he may not be subjected to the same kind of alienation as some of the other IDP students.

“They received me well because they do not know; I have not said anything, so they received me well, like I was just another student” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

The anxiety of being disclosed is illustrated by an event that took place right after this boy arrived at the school:

“Once, at the matriculation period, they grabbed my shirt and asked me what I had inside, but I said nothing. Suddenly they ran away with my papers because they wanted

to see my documents. They nearly spotted the Carta de Desplazado,³⁷ but did not find out” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

As suggested in the quotes above from this student he is not comfortable with the idea that the other students in the school would know about his social identity. Later in the interview he stated that he felt normal, welcomed, and accepted by his classmates. Such a view corroborates what Goffman points out happens in a passing situation (1963: 74). Goffman asserts that a person consciously or unconsciously control what information which is communicated to other people; namely the act of *passing*. It happens when potential discrediting information is hidden (Goffman, 1963). The data suggest that the student chooses to conceal information that could have made him labelled as a *desplazado*. Cameron avoided telling his peers about his social identity in an attempt to become a ‘normal’ student, i.e. not an IDP from rural Colombia. Such avoidance faces difficulties in the process of passing, because symbols as the “Carta de Desplazada” could have made the other students aware of his social identity as an IDP.

In relation to Goffman such symbols communicate social information that is “frequently and steadily available, and routinely sought and received” (1963: 43). The research participant may have realized that his document contained a symbolic function, because he acted unwillingly when the “normal” students approached him and tried to run away with his documents and aimed to passing as a “normal” student in order to prevent a leakage of signs that disclosed him as an IDP (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09). It also stated information about the student as an IDP, and would have led to a revealing to his classmates of his *real social identity*. Although this document is not available to other than the student, teachers, and coordinators at the school, “normal” students may have noticed that new students with a history of displacement had brought with them the document previous years, thus relating it with the identity of a displaced person. But are there any problems of disclosing information about themselves as former displaced children? Cameron imagines that he would be rejected by his peers if they would find out.

“Students who have been displaced should adapt to the other students so that they can avoid to be met with suspicion because of their background. They should also avoid saying anything which leads to bad looks, rejection, or something like that. I imagine

³⁷ English: “Displacement document”: a formal document the children have to bring to the local school authorities to receive free school materials and easier enrollment into the formal school system. The document is given after registration in the RUPD (Registro Único de Población Desplazada). For further explanation, see sub-sequence 2.3.2.

that they would reject me or something if I say it, and that is why I do not want my class companions to know” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

Maybe understandable in the wake of such a negative incident with the Carta de Desplazada, he argues that all IDP students should keep their social identity secretly when they meet students at a new school. The advice was given by several IDP students as well. Link and Phelan suggest that a person’s fear of rejection is a consequence of a belief that other will undervalue and reject him or her (2001: 373), and makes sense with the IDP student’s acts of passing as well as his advice to other IDP students. However, such a view is followed by some negative consequences. Link & Phelan argue that conceivable outcomes of can be negative; the students may act with less confidentiality and with more cynical behaviour, and that social interactions with potential stigmatizers gets uncomfortable and nervous (Link & Phelan, 2001). Moreover, IDP students as Cameron may also avoid learning situations at the school because they experience participation with “normal” students as threatening (Chryssochoou, 2004). According to Goffman, passing of the IDP identity can prevent development of trustful relationships, as a consequence of not telling “the intimate or to feel guilty for not doing so” (1963: 74).

In comparison, one of the female research participants informed me that all her friends and teachers knew that she had been displaced. She underlines that they had not discriminated against her when she told them. However, she makes a distinction between “amigas”³⁸ and “compañeras”³⁹ and says that she prefers that the latter do not know at all. She seems to believe that her compañeras would discriminate against her, and reduces the openness of her social identity to her closest ‘amigas’. The data do not tell why she was completely open about her social identity to her friends outside the school, and why she avoids saying anything to her compañeras, but it might be possible that the close relationship with the amigas allows her to feel more comfortable with her social identity and that the compañeras present a possible unknown factor. Such a strategy of restricted openness may happen when the individual feels it is safe to trust those persons in the immediate social environment (Goffman, 1963).

As with the previous research participant (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09), she consider the other student not to know about her stigma. Openness and less information control seem

³⁸ English: Friends.

³⁹ English: Peers.

to be her attitude outside the social setting at school. This behaviour is in line with Goffman's view, that "nearly all matters which are very secret are still known to someone" (1963: 74).

5.1.3 Rejection

So far we can say that the act of passing appears to also be something that both male and female students do, but the way in which they go about it may vary somewhat. Moreover, various forms of passing are not only based on assumptions of how "normal" students would treat or reject them as consequences of *discrimination*. One of the students experienced severe harassment after exposure of his *actual social identity*, and described an incident that happened after he arrived at the school in Suba:

"All the students know that I am displaced because I said it to them during the third term. The students invited me to play with them, but at the end two persons started to beat me. I cried" (Interview, Calvin, Suba, 11/03/09).

Another informant says that the teachers and coordinators at the school came to know that she had been displaced during the enrolment process in the start of the school year, and says they were surprised by the fact that she came from outside Bogotá:

"The teachers were surprised when they came to know that I had been displaced and said I did not look like I was an IDP. I do not have the characteristics such as psychological wounds. The displacement did not affect me, and I am normal" (Interview: Isla, Suba, 11/04/09).

Here she put in words a certain characteristic, i.e. psychological wounds that people believe IDPs obtain. Goffman calls such characteristics a "visibility of a particular stigma" (Goffman 1963: 48). Psychological wounds as described above is a more subtle characteristic than perhaps a physical handicap, nevertheless she seems to believe that her teachers defined such a hidden characteristic as a visible one. Other characteristics in the case of Suba were to a greater extent clearer and more visible, which are linked to the identity of former displaced persons,⁴⁰ such as different dialectic variations of the Castellano language, different behaviour from that of the students, the situation of being poorer than the rest, and different ethnocultural backgrounds. The latter characteristic falls into the category of a tribal stigma (Goffman, 1963). As a visible characteristic one could think that a rejection at the school

⁴⁰ Many students did not have another skin colour than the rest of the students from Bogotá, but rather ethnocultural differences as another language use, distinct manners of talking, religious beliefs, and so on; various characteristics that made other people to categorize students as IDPs (Fieldnotes, 10/08/09).

would happen because one can assume that the student had enrolled the school because of displacement. However, one of the research participants from an indigenous group from Southern Colombia told that she had not experienced rejection at school, but rather outside it:

“In this school people do not go away from me, but outside the school some people do. They reject us a lot, the indigenous people. I am fine when I am at school, but when I am at another side of town I can hear that the other people talk negatively about the indigenous people, saying that “they are very aggressive” and that we are bad” (Interview: Kaia, Suba, 10/26/09).

Rejection is not considered common at this school, but she reports that it happens frequently in the city. She tells about other people’s perceptions towards the indigenous people, and witnesses negatively *labelling* on behalf of a whole group of the indigenous people, who are labelled as “aggressive” and “bad”. Such a labelling is a typical aspect of stigma, and happens when people is “linking a person to a set of undesirable characteristics that form the stereotype” (Link & Phelan 2001: 369). Stereotyping of the IDPs can make the first meeting between a displaced student and a normal student an unsure event because the stigmatized cannot know how he will be received by his peers (Goffman, 1963). At a macro level, Moncrieffe (2007) finds that such negative labelling is leading to inequality and poverty in the long run. In the short run for individuals, however, labelling of IDP students at the school in Suba challenges the opportunity to come as they are, and not only as victims of *a reducing of life chances* (Goffman, 1963) or negative labelling (Link & Phelan 2001; Moncrieffe (2007).

The encouragement of passing was frequently expressed by the research participants at the school in the Suba district. Thus, IDP students at Suba had a strategy that becomes strict and careful when they face their class companions. If it is considered safe to tell anyone, they did, but only to a few friends which they considered close. While the act of passing (Goffman, 1963) was encouraged at the school in Suba, students at the other schools represented openness about one’s stigma.

5.2 Inclusion at Usme: Consequences of acceptance

IDP students at Usme have different experiences than those at Suba, and all of the research participants here can be categorized as *discredited* in Goffman’s (1963) meaning of the word, which means that the “stigmatized individual assume his differentness is known about already (1963: 4). One could expect that they would experience harassment and rejection as happened

at the school in Suba, but another pattern was evident; despite openness about their social identity as an IDP, the Usme-students have not experienced rejection as such. Isaiah, for instance, said that “the other students do not make any fuss about the displacement” (Interview: Isaiah, Usme, 11/12/09). He describes a situation in which social interaction happens as his social identity as an IDP was considered a normal status, reaching a kind of normalcy among the other students. Another student was eager to express her social identity to her peers and teachers:

“My compañeras knew that I was displaced, and we became friends. They like me a lot. When I came to this school, there were other children coming from foreign parts of Colombia as well. We are many children in the classroom who are displaced. Sometimes new teachers arrive, and then I try to explain to them that I have been displaced” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09)

Her story shows eagerness to breaking down a potential “discrepancy between an individual’s actual social identity and his virtual one” (Goffman 1963: 41) by telling new teachers. She expresses a confidence towards her peers, saying that they like her (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09). Her reason for doing this was to gain respect by both her peers and her teachers:

“I want to tell them because I want to have respect, something which is very important; to respect persons and to get respect back” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09).

Such a practice of openness was also told by a male student. He explained that “when I came to this school, there were other children coming from foreign parts of Colombia as well” (Interview, Usme, 06/11/09), and by telling he would be less unconfident in the situation at school:

“I tell them because I want to make friends and to get confidence. I also do it in corroboration of my friends and other persons that I know” (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

As one can see, passing strategies in order to conceal important information about oneself (Goffman, 1963) are absent here. The need for disclosing their social identity is present, and even actively carried out to peers and teachers. How can these practices be explained in terms of stigmatization? We know that stigmatized people will seek to being considered normal, and that passing strategies will be applied in order to be looked at as “normal” (Goffman, 1963). One possibility can be the fact that the students are not only a few individuals with a social identity as displaced persons, but rather parts of “many children in the classroom who are

displaced” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09). Thus, the need of holding back information in order to be rejected is not necessarily present in their context.

This boy continues stating that he did not have any friends at the new school when he came there, yet a perception of inclusion after arrival becomes clear as he talks further during our interview, pointing out the following:

“The coordinator opened up the gates to the school so I could start here. I felt uncomfortable because I did not know anyone, nor having friends to play with. In addition, I felt very uncomfortable to be in the city of Bogotá. After a while it turned out to be better each day, and last year I started to make friends and have fun. My compañeros welcomed me well, thanks to God” (Interview: Jacob, Usme, 11/12/09).

His experience is consistent with several students’, e.g. of those of Gabriella, telling that “the coordinator received me well when I came here, and they treated me nice and normal, as I was a child that had respect” (Interview: Gabriella, Usme, 11/12/09). About her classmates she says that “they knew that I was displaced, and we became friends” (Interview: Gabriella, Usme, 11/12/09). In other words, being an IDP in this school does not seem to be as relevant in the long run for the social interaction between the students in comparison to those in the school in Suba. However, it was an exception from this pattern at Usme. The teachers were active participants in mapping out who are IDPs:

“Last year when I was in third grade, the teacher asked everyone in the room “who is displaced here?”, and I raised my hand because I could not refuse myself” (Interview: Jacob, Usme, 11/12/09).

Even if the teachers created a sense of openness between the IDP students and the rest, their role as active participants in the disclosure process was in other cases not popular. Contrary to the feeling of acceptance as experienced by the two IDP students discussed earlier, the IDP students did not perceive the teachers’ participation as a positive act. Below a student discusses the process of being new at school, and carry out a strategy of passing after his arrival at school:

“The other students received me well because no one knew that I was displaced when I arrived. We came here to buy a house, and that is why everyone received me as I was a normal student. After a while, however, the teachers asked everyone who were displaced to raise their hands and then they divided into specific classes; one for us and another for the rest of the students. After this incident the students became aware

that I had been displaced, and suddenly everyone started to look strange at me⁴¹ and stayed away” (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/11).

This student perceives the welcoming arrival at school because the normal students thought his family came to buy a house and not as a reason of displacement. When he was asked by the teacher to reveal it, then he was suddenly treated differently than before. One explanation of the change by his *compañeros* can be that they did not see him as “normal”. The fact that the teacher divided him and other IDP students into specific classes apart from the “normal” students, could have increased their stigma even further as they are not treated differently by their *compañeros* but also physically separated from them by the school. The school’s and teachers’ rationale of dividing into different classes is not known based on the data, and one can only speculate. One of the outcomes, however, is that the “normal” students started to look strange at the IDP student as a direct consequence of the physical separation, thus creating a sense of “us” and “them” (Link & Phelan, 2001). Such a *separation* is an element in which stigmatization is constructed because it creates a rationale for “devaluing, rejecting, and excluding” people who are labelled and set apart (Link & Phelan 2001: 370). When such a separation takes place in social situations where “different” people socialize with “normal” people, consequences as status loss and discrimination are common (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Goffman argues such categorizing into *back places*, i.e. to put the IDP students into a separate classroom, is likely to “provide an atmosphere of special piquancy” (1963: 81) because acquaintances of others with similar social identity and background can be enriching (Goffman, 1963). A division of segregated classes, or back places, was common when IDPs had arrived to the school at Usme, and contrary to Goffman’s view, the research participant’s story below found such a segregating practice as alienating. For, as he explains, the consequences of showing his social identity to the *compañeros* resulted in alienation by his fellow classmates:

“When my *compañeros* knew that I was displaced, I felt as a stranger⁴² because they treated me well before the teachers divided us into different classes. Before they were my friends, but after this incident they rejected me (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

⁴¹ Spanish: “Mirarme mal”.

⁴² Spanish: “Alejado”.

As we can see, the teacher took the lead to map which students had been displaced. Gideon attributed the good receiving of him at school to the fact that no one knew about his social identity, but experienced some rejection after letting the rest of the students know. The separation into different classes contributed to rejection. However, he concluded that after a while “the compañeros came back and talked with me, bit by bit. Now I have a lot of friends” (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

It is problematic that the process of disclosure is set forth by the teachers at the school in Usme, because it leads to rejection and distancing from the “normal” students and the IDP students. A positive outcome, on the other hand, is that his compañeros came back as friends after a while, and indicates that their IDP status diminishes after a certain period of time. An acceptance of the normalcy of him as a student was appreciated:

“The teachers did not treat us as we were displaced; they treated us equally as other children and as we came from the same social stratum. The teachers love us as much as everyone else” (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

However, other students wanted equal treatment in line with “normal” students and not separation as Link & Phelan (2001) outline it, is preferred by students at Suba. A student at the school in Suba pointed out that unequally treatment of IDPs and normal students was unfavourable on behalf of the IDP students. Danny tells from an earlier school from where he came:

“When I came to the other school, noone of the teachers presented us to the class as desplazados, and they asked the new students like they asked everyone else, as we not were displaced. In this school, the teachers do not know that I have been displaced. In my opinion the teachers should not treat children differently those who are displaced because of the violence from el campo. They should treat anyone as they were equal” (Interview: Danny, Suba, 11/04/09)

As we can see, he wished that the teachers could treat them equally with the “normal” students, as he had experienced at the earlier school, being normal or displaced respectively. Thus, the practice of openness by the teacher contradicts the fact that the students feel stigmatized. While the student in Usme said he felt like they moved away from him, and emphasized the importance of having friends among IDPs in the separated IDP class. For the student at Suba, on the other hand, it appeared more difficult to reveal his social identity as an IDP, thus risking more after disclosure to the “normal” students. At Suba the teacher never made such a separation into different classes. Subsequently, his stigma continues to be

hidden, and he may go on with passing in order to avoid rejection or other forms of discrimination.

One of the students shows that the reluctance to flexibility in practical arrangements was higher than the school in Usme:

“Almost noone at the school helped me. Last year, for instance, I needed to study at the morning classes, but noone would help me in any way. The teachers did not help me at all, they were not interested” (Interview: Esperanza, Suba, 11/04/09).

One can also note that one of the students at Usme was shocked when the topic of rejection was introduced, and asked back why the other students would act in such a way. However, the data did demonstrated rejection at the school in Usme. In this story, the stigma is attached to lack of food as a consequence of poverty:

“Sometimes I feel they have rejected me. It happens when I do not have any money. Then they do not play with me, nor initiating contact with me” (Interview: Jacob, Usme, 11/12/09).

The story illuminates the impact of poverty in terms of the students’ feelings towards their peers. The aspect of poverty as a reason behind stigmatization, however, has been distinctly less evident in the data than rejection based on stereotyping, and is not discussed further in the thesis.

5.3 Personal coping strategies: Ontosystemic factors

Terrisse introduces the ontosystemic level, which are personal factors “acquired during infancy as attachment, cognitive development, social skills, etc” (Terrisse 2000: 5). Personal factors as Terrisse suggests children attain during their childhood may vary, depending on the individual. The data showed that some of the children had in place strategies to cope with their situation at school after they had been displaced. Those who use such strategies can “determine how well children adjust to traumatic stress” (Punamäki et al 2001: 257). Coping with one’s traumatic stress is difficult to measure, because it depends on how the displacement took place and the children’s ages, and there are neither data available in this research of other agents around the child’s context as parents, teachers or school psychologists. Nevertheless, it is interesting to have a look at the strategies these students used in order to indicate how they deal with the traumatic events a displacement in many

cases contain. Two introductory stories about how the event of displacement took place for two of the research participants are presented as following:

“First the guerrillas killed my two brothers. Later they came for my dad to put him in prison. After this incident they said we had to move away from our house. If we resisted they would kill us. Afterwards they killed my mum, and later my dad.” (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/09).

“When we left ‘el campo’ everything was terrible. There has been a great change since we left there and until we came here. I will always keep the experience of this with me in my soul. It is only my own and will always be that. Though I will always seguir adelante⁴³” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09).

With regard to various coping strategies, all students were asked if they did something to cope with the difficulties they met at school (See Appendix A). Some of the children I interviewed seemed to have developed various activities and then may have contributed to their own process of resilience. In spite of the negative experiences expressed by the first quote and the possibility of trauma as a result, Abigail explains how she “sing, read sad tales and stories” (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/09). Such activities are coherent with those of another female student who told that paramilitary groups had given her family 12 hours to leave their home, and in order to forget this incident, she said that “I make drawings and write songs to deal with my thoughts after this happening” (Interview: Gabriella, Usme, 11/12/09). Writing is important to more than a few students when negative thoughts appear:

“When the thoughts come, I start to write and to draw because I am not saying anything to anyone. I express my thoughts by writing and drawing” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09).

“I am very fond of stories and poetry. I wrote down my feelings which I had when I was displaced, and I wrote them as poems. Additionally, I read books, and that has helped me a lot to understand more; especially those who describe how to deal with family, friends, and teachers” (Interview: Danny, Suba, 11/04/09).

Their stories can be seen in the light of Pennebaker (2006), whose viewpoint is that writing is an especially constructive technique in dealing with traumatic experiences. Thus, making use of this the students have found an effective strategy to deal with both negative thoughts when they appear (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09) and also to further develop personal growth (Interview: Danny, Suba, 11/04/09).

⁴³ ‘Seguir adelante’ used in this context means to move on and to not giving up. It was a commonly used expression when the research participants expressed thoughts they had for the future.

5.4 Family, teachers, peers: Microsystemic factors

In the following sub-section the findings from the two cases in the light of Bronfenbrenner's EST are analyzed. The focus will be at the micro and macro levels, due to the relevancy of the findings. A comparative view on the IDPs experiences from both cases showed that the importance of the mother generally was high, but also aunts and siblings were found to be crucial in the IDP students' daily life at school.

5.4.1 The mother as “most important in the world”⁴⁴

The mother can be understood as a ‘primary dyad’. This means that she continues to be a part of the child's thoughts and acts also when she is not with him or her (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A good relationship between a mother and the child can strengthen the motivation for learning for the latter (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 58). One of the students expressed her relation with her mother as following:

“Outside the school a lot of people help me; my mum helps me a lot so I can continue with my studies despite being pregnant. My mum has been the most important in the whole world” (Interview: Isla, Suba, 11/04/09).

The relationship with her mother is seen as crucial for the continuation of the studies, especially the fact that she was imperative for preventing her to drop-out of the school. A supportive mother can also play a difference in school achievement. As one of the students expresses below, an intervention by her mother made her go through an important task at school:

“I have never failed a subject before. But this year I was going to fail because I could not manage to do the schoolwork alone. One day when it was difficult to present my work, my mum made me do it. My mum and my brothers support me a lot, and they are the most important in the world” (Interview: Esperanza, Suba, 11/04/09).

Her story is also consistent with another student's experiences:

My mom has helped me a lot, because she makes it possible for me to bring with me the homework (Interview: Gabriella, Usme, 11/12/09).

The supportive relationship with her mother is thus seen as an important aspect in their educational process. Their stories are in line with Bronfenbrenner's concept of a primary dyad

⁴⁴ Spanish: “Mi familia es la más importante en todo el mundo”. A concluding remark by one of the students when describing the significance of other persons for the continuation at school.

because of the strong contribution such relationships have for the motivation of learning (1979). Both students felt that their mothers supported them a lot. Hence, the primary dyad their mothers constitute does also seem to influence them emotionally even though she is not together with them in the school setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). One can say that such “two-person systems” are positive for the student’s development process (1979: 5). Macy experiences support from her mother as well, and contributed to her own perception of a higher education later in her life. She told that

“my mother has helped me with everything related to the studies. My dream is to study at the university. My mom says that “my dream is to see you there at the university”. The most important person in my life is my mother” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/11).

In addition, she states that “our parents taught us that the first thing we have to get in the life is education” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09). The common valuing of the importance of education by her parents may have made it easier for her to perceive that she has the abilities to a higher education. Hoëm (1978) argues that for many the family represents an important input in terms of educational attainment and ambition. As a result for this student her family is then seen as imperative to being able to achieve her goals.

5.4.2 Aunts and siblings as “supporters”

While the story above showed the mother as a primary dyad and important for the survival in the school system, another student describes how relatives could fill roles of primary dyads as well. Renée for instance, emphasizes how her relatives have created a *molar activity*, as shown in the quote below. This means that a person close to the child influences its development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Renée attributes her successfulness with the subjects at school to her relatives:

“My aunt is most important to me, she has supported me, and she says that I am going to study, and that I am going to *seguir adelante*. They have supported me with everything, and I like it a lot” (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09).

An aunt seemed also to be a primary dyad for another student as well. Abigail points out that her aunt has done considerable effort to helping her after the incident of displacement:

“My family has fought a lot for me and my brother, as well as my aunt. After my mum was killed, she got the custody of us, and she is like our second mum” (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/09).

Interestingly, and in line with Isla's experiences of the supportive mechanisms of the near family at home, she sees her aunt's support as vital for her to be able to continue her public education, recognizing later that "if she had not been there for me, I would not stay in this school, but would rather be in el campo" (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09). Staying in school can thus be seen as an outcome of previous stages of care by her aunt. One of the boys from the school in Usme said that

In the beginning my siblings were important, we get along very good. We all knew what we were going through after being displaced, so we know how it was to be alone (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

He explains his good relationship with his siblings because they have the displacement in common and shared thoughts about the loneliness related to this event. A caring behaviour seems to be a feature of their relationship, thus molar activities have been established and can contribute to this student's positive development.

5.4.3 The teachers as "distancing themselves from the students"

This sub-sequence analyzes the role of the teacher at the two schools used as cases. We shall see that they are important to the IDP students in terms of inclusion to the educational system after enrolment. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) teachers may play a certain role in the ecology of children's development processes, depending on the content and structure of the micro system. The IDP students' experiences indicate both negative and positive feelings towards the teachers. Naomi tells about a distanced relationship with her teacher:

"They are a bit different from where I lived before. There we talked more with them, but at this school we do not talk with them as much as there. In Barranquilla the teachers are nice, but here they are distancing themselves from the students. If we did not understand the subject at the other school, we asked them and they explained well to us. When the same thing happens here, the teachers become angry" (Interview: Naomi, Suba, 11/03/09).

This experience is consistent with another student as well:

"Almost no one at the school has been important to me. When all comes to all no one really helps. Last year, for instance, I needed to study at the morning classes, but the teachers would not help me at all" (Interview: Isla, Suba, 11/04/09).

However, the findings also show the role of the teacher as crucial to their positive development:

“I failed some subjects the first period, but my teacher helped me. The first period I arrived at fifth grade and I was afraid because I thought that I could do it. But I managed to recover, and now I am fine” (Interview: Gabriella, Usme, 11/12/09).

In addition to help from this teacher related to the schoolwork, another student tells about his teacher as the most important person to him.

“The teacher Filippa received me very well when I came here. She wanted to know if I was displaced, and afterwards she helped me with everything” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

Such a relationship deviates from the other ones as shown above because it does also exist outside the regular classroom activities. The extent of how meaningful the student-teacher relationships are, depends in this case on the interest and efforts the teacher personally invests. When the teacher does so, she became the most important person to this student.

5.4.4 The students “started to talk to me after a while”

Both adults and peers, as a part of the micro system, of the IDP students seem to play a significant role related to learning and social well-being. Such a peer-socialization is a typical feature of what Mead calls a cofigurative culture, i.e. that his peers have a certain influence of the inclusion processes in a new social context (Mead, 1978). One of the students explains:

“At first I felt alone in the classroom. After a while they started to talk with me, and I said I was from the south-eastern part of Colombia. Some of them said that they did not come from Bogotá either and like that we started to become friends” (Interview: Kaia, Suba, 10/26/09).

The peers have an important role for one of the boys, and are closely linked to play:

“My friends do not beat me or anything. Sometimes we play and fight, but we adjust to each other in a rough manner. They treat me well, I treat them well, and we play together” (Interview: Calvin, Suba, 11/03/09).

One of the students agrees, and says that her friends have helped her to adapt to the school environment:

“I thought it would be very difficult to adapt at this school, but I was wrong. A “compañera”⁴⁵ defended me one time when the older children were threatening. Another classmate stays with me, he is very funny, and we are passing a lot of good times together. Both are nice, and now we are friends. Because of these friendships it was easy for me to adapt to this school” (Interview: Esperanza, Suba, 11/04/09).

⁴⁵ English: A female class companion.

On the other hand, the inclusion of peers can be experienced quite differently, and may have negative influences:

“It was very difficult to get friends. Even if there were some good children at the study it was difficult because they did not understand me that well. One year I lost almost everything because of bad company at the school” (Interview: Isla, Suba, 11/04/09).

A male student shares her experience of the peer’s as destructive elements in the school context, saying that “the students fight, and they find problems with some of the students, and start to make trouble for them” (Interview: Jacob, Usme, 11/12/09). In contrast, one of the other students says that her friends have had an important impact of her ability to move on after a great loss in connection with the forced displacement:

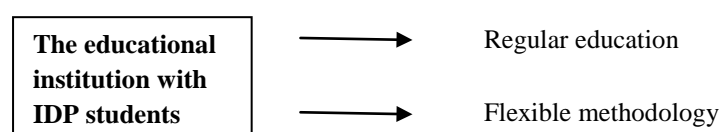
“The guerrilla killed many friends at el campo; they killed us without any reason and removed persons that had not done anything wrong. It was terrible, and I was only thinking about my friends. Now I have a lot of friends, also among the teachers, so it has not been that tough to be here” (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09).

As we can see, the IDP students’ peers are both seen as positive and negative factors for the inclusion process after arrival at the public schools; negatively in terms of fighting and initiating of trouble (Interview: Jacob, Usme, 11/12/09), and positively when they become supportive friends, or “interpersonal relations” in the words of Bronfenbrenner (1979) (Interview: Macy, Usme, 11/06/09). So far social systems of inclusion have been discussed in terms of relations between the IDP students and their mothers, teachers, and peers. Next sequence discusses macrosystemic factors in the light of EST that emerged from the CDA analysis and seeks to bridge the experiences of the research participants in regard to the macrosystemic influences on the educational system.

5.5 Ideology and curricular challenges

Based on the findings and theoretical analysis a few points emerge in this respect which takes place at the macro system around the child. From a rights-based perspective with regard to equality of survival in the educational system, the content in terms of subjects are looked at in this section. The MEN has as a goal to adopt a flexible methodology with a regular content, as put forth in the figure below (2010b):

Figure 5.1 *Enrolment into the public education system after displacement*



Source: Ministerio de Educación (2010c)

The flexible methodology is meant to provide the IDP students with various forms of methods that reflect the possible cultural and methodological variations between them. This is also mentioned in MEN's guidelines on education for vulnerable populations in public schools, though it only concerns ethnic groups:

“The education for ethnic groups is a part of the public education service and demand a recognition of the plurality associated with various social groups, meaning that pedagogical suggestions should lead to inclusion of multiple expressions of the diversity, and to make it possible to construct new educational alternatives” (MEN 2005: 17).

Moreover, “the [Colombian] state shall guarantee an adequate cover of the service, and assure the necessary conditions for the minors to access and persist in the education system” (NCPC; Article 67). Thus, the state guarantees educational survival throughout ten years of public education. This is in line with the UN's policy on MDG no. 2; universal educational access for all (UNESCO, 2009), arguing that the integration of excluded groups such as “the impoverished, rural populations, the marginalized, the displaced, refugees, nomads, immigrants, street and working children, and others in difficult circumstances”, should be integrated in educational plans and processes (UNESCO 2009: 48). When generalizing curricula the needs of racial, religious, and cultural minorities should also be addressed (UNESCO, 2009). Such an objective fails in the light of the IDP children's experiences. In relation to their stories, one subject distinguished itself, namely English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It must be noted that all students had a great interest in another subject, Mathematics, and is a strengthening factor because the students felt they managed this subject well and considered it very useful. Due to the limited scope of the study, it will not be explored further for now. The forthcoming sub-sequence discusses the EFL within the methodological framework of a critical discourse analysis.

5.5.1 English as a foreign language (EFL)

The official language of instruction in the educational system is Castellano,⁴⁶ and is widely spoken throughout the country in both urban and rural areas because of the long-lasting domination of the Spanish language during the colonial period (1535-1819). The state, however, formally acknowledges local languages and dialects which ethnic groups speak and use daily in their own territories. Public education in indigenous communities shall, according to the law, be constructed with “their own linguistic traditions” as well as including Castellano in bilingual educational programmes (NCPC; Article 10). Since all of the research participants among the IDP students spoke Spanish well, I chose not to include the bilingual aspect during the investigations.

This sub-section discusses the Colombian government’s neoliberal policy as expressed in the RE educational policies, and problematizes the expressed importance of competitive skills and the lack of relevance for the students. Public policy is, Terrisse claims (2000), a part of the macro system that contributes to the daily life and steer the course of behaviour and development of the child within the other systems (micro-, meso-, and exo). Terrisse argues that factors in the macro system, as values, ideologies, and beliefs, “do not become observable until they are translated into changes in society and government policies as are then put into operation within institutions” (Terrisse 2000: 4). In this case, English as a Foreign Language⁴⁷ (EFL) is observable by the stories of the IDPs and their experiences with the subject, and illuminates challenges as the policies face in their implementation. Thus, their experiences become “observable” by shortly discussing them in the light of a neoliberal educational context as proposed by Guerra and Chávez (2006). The use of the term *neoliberal* is applied in the discussion of the educational policy because of the literature’s tendency to refer to Colombia as a neoliberal state (see 1.1.1).

In the following, the RE is being analyzed in the light of criticism of a neoliberal education policy, and is empirically linked to EFL. The educational policy of EFL is manifested in the curriculum, Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Ingles, through the policy framework RE, and in the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. The range of these

⁴⁶ Equivalent to Spanish, but has in Latin-America developed several distinct meanings in a range of words.

⁴⁷ The fact that there are 64 languages spoken in Colombia (DANE, 2007), makes the use of English as the main second language a bit ironically. Guerrero finds that bilingualism is equivalent to speaking English (2008) in the Colombian education system.

policies are wide, and given the time scope of the study only content expressed through the RE policy framework is undertaken. In line with Carnoy's (2000) argument that globalization as shown in the education system does not have a clear conception for improvements of the quality of education (Carnoy 2000: 50), English as a subject in the curriculum has been considered to be crucial in order to become competitive and meet the demands of the globalized society (PND, 2006-2010). MEN emphasizes the importance of mastering EFL, explaining the rationale of it in the following statement:

“It is essential to be competent in another language in a globalized world, because it leads to a better communication, opening of borders, understanding other contexts, gaining knowledge and make it circulate, and to play a decisive role in the development of the country” (MEN, 2006b).

According to the MEN, English was added to the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras*⁴⁸ as the main foreign language because it is assumed to “prepare the Colombian students to meet the demands of the globalized world” (MEN, 2006b). In the sense that EFL is considered to be a mean of improving of the quality of the educational system, it is defined as such by MEN, with “knowledge and power they bring with them” (Foucault 1971, 46). While other definitions of quality can be considered (e.g. relevancy of curricular content), EFL is already defined as crucial to the development of the country; socially and economically (MEN, 2006a).

EFL in practice

The further discussion is illuminated by excerpts of the IDP students' stories, and analyzes how they consider the EFL as a subject. A main strategy to achieve the goal of using English as a mean for an increased socially and economically development is to “capacitate the teachers with innovative methodologies which enable them not only to teach, but to implement the process adequately” (RE 2002: 6). The quality of the current teaching methodologies in the two schools can be asked whether they are contributing to the main strategy of the RE. It seems that the quality of teaching of English is weak, and it is difficult - on behalf of the IDP students - to justify the current way of the subjects' quality. IDP students faced immense learning challenges with English as a foreign language (EFL). These challenges are expressed in various ways. One of them tells that English is difficult because

⁴⁸ English: Basic Standards for Competencies in Foreign Languages.

she “do not understand what the teacher says” (Interview: Abigail, Suba, 10/26/09). Several students expressed the same concern, and said that English is the most difficult subject simply because they do not understand it [“no entiendo nada”]. In addition, learning difficulties in EFL are not only related to listening and understanding, but involves also challenges of pronunciation, as explained by this student:

“I do not understand English. I know how to write the words, but when I shall read it, the pronunciation is difficult. The teacher says that I write well, but the problem is to pronounce the words” (Interview: Renée, Suba, 10/26/09).

The teaching of English causes frustrations with another student, saying that

“sometimes the teacher says an English word, and because I do not know the language well, I do not know what she says... Sometimes he talks a lot in English, but I do not understand anything of what she says, that is what I think is most difficult as a subject” (Interview: Cameron, Suba, 10/26/09).

Not understanding English seems to lead to concentration problems. A student that considered English as a highly difficult subject said that she failed to concentrate during the courses (Interview: Naomi, Suba, 11/03/09). Moreover, the subject is experienced as exhaustive and one of the students feels confused during the teaching lessons:

“When they teach English I feel confused, even if I try and try it only wear myself out” (Interview: Esperanza, Suba, 11/04/09).

One of the students pointed out that he did not like English because they “explain in a way I do not understand” (Interview: Isaiah, Usme, 11/12/09)). To summarize, the students’ experiences between the schools express an unanimity of EFL across both the school in Suba and the school in Usme. According to these data, it seems that the confusedness that emerges because of the perceived irrelevancy of the subject is doing more harm than the development of competitive citizens in a globalized world. Moreover, their experiences indicate weaknesses of the quality of instruction of EFL in the two schools. Since EFL is a weak point in the learning processes at the schools, it may likely challenge the total educational quality at the schools. Historically, a lack of quality has led to high repetition rates as well as low achievements in Latin America in general (Schiefelbein 1992: 15), and the IDP students’ stories related to EFL are, in that case, not an exception. One of the main reasons that basic learning needs not have been met has been the teaching methods used (Schiefelbein, 1992). This reason is applicable to the data, which reveal a consensus among the IDP students’ understanding of EFL is thoroughly explained as three different reasons, namely a lack of

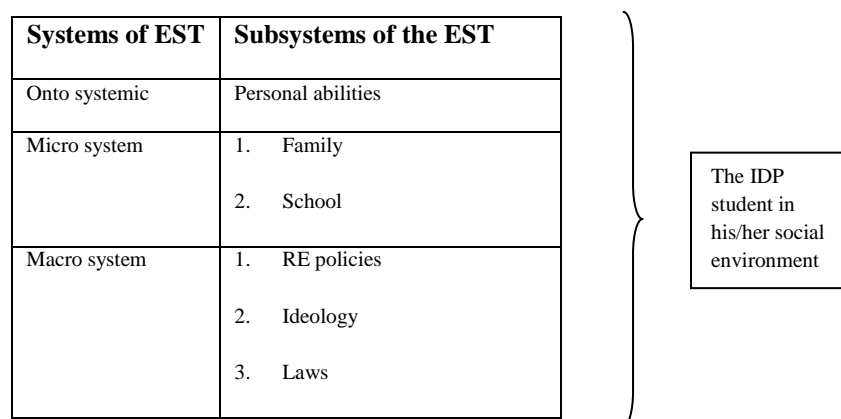
understanding, pronunciation, and explanation by the teacher. These are all challenging factors which are related to the methodology of teaching, and to the quality of education in the immediate learning environment “experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22) at the micro level, and the MEN’s objective of effective EFL learning as a mean to meeting the global demands of the society at the macro level (MEN, 2006a).

Summing up, English as a Foreign language is associated with noticeable difficulties, and all IDP students disclaim English as an interesting subject with meaning. Moreover, the subject has a low status among primary and secondary level IDP students, and the language is not considered functional or useful. A discrepancy to MEN’s consideration of the EFL as crucial for the development of the nation and the IDP students’ feelings towards it is therefore evident.

5.6 Summary

So far, data from the fieldwork at the two case schools in Bogotá has been presented, analyzed, and discussed in order to see how IDPs are included in the public education system, including a look at what factors that are strengthening and weakening the process of inclusion into the public schools. The discussion problematized various points of views by the children of both negative and positive angles which are all a part of their daily life at the schools in Suba and Usme districts. Stigmatization happens in both schools, though to a greater extent at the school north of Bogotá; Suba. The research participants told about several incidents where they had felt rejection and harassment based on their social status as IDPs. In regard to social and academic development, mothers, aunts, and siblings play a major role for the research participants. At school, their peers and teachers do have an impact. Interrelations with their peers are considered to be stabilizing factors after periods of discrimination in the beginning. Not all of the systems in the EST were echoing profoundly in the perspectives of the IDP students. The figure below shows the three systems of EST which have been relevant to the data.

Figure 5.2 *Relevant systems of the EST*



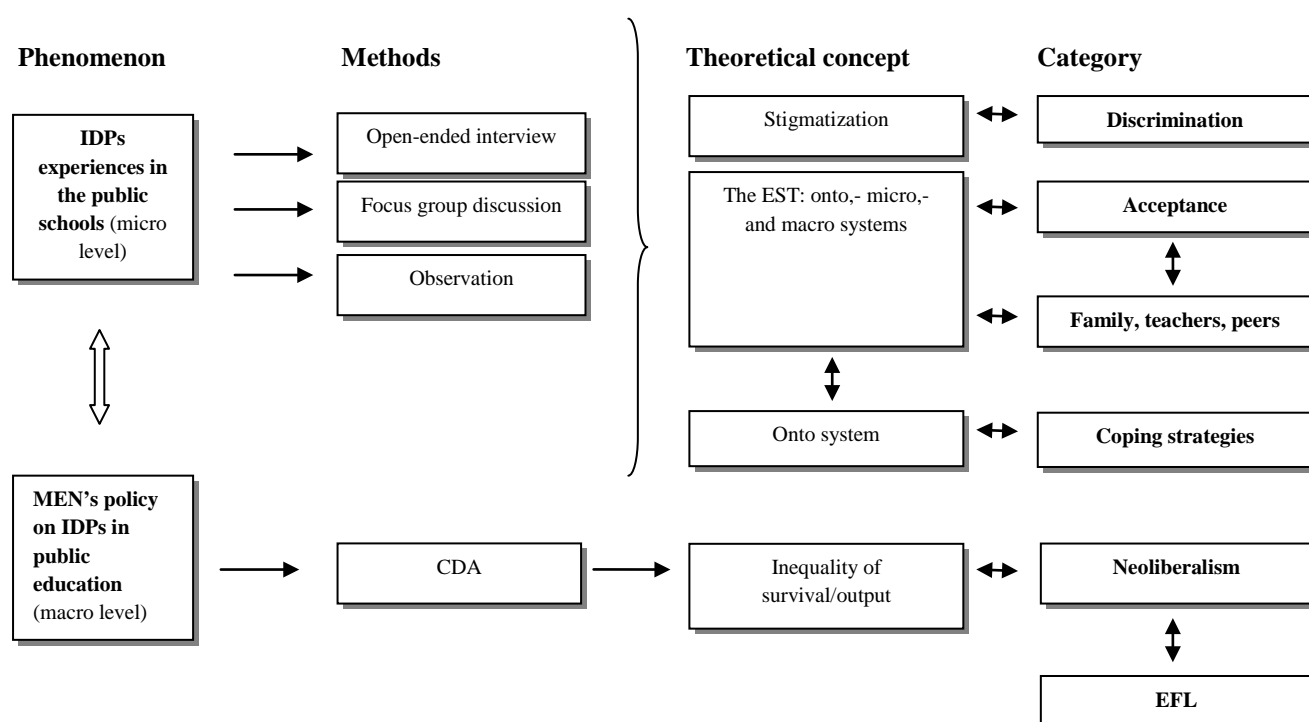
Source: Based on Terrisse's categorization of risk/protective factors in ecosystemic analysis (2000: 5).

Coping strategies as a part of children's personal abilities were actively used by IDP students at both schools. The most commonly used strategies to adapt were writing and reading; strategies regarded as fruitful to develop resilience after earlier stressful events. Next, family members as the mother, aunts, and siblings have been discussed and found crucial at both cases. Moreover, the analysis of the educational policy are discussed in the light of a neoliberal approach, and found that the two subjects Mathematics and EFL were perceived by the IDP students as attractive and unhelpful respectively. The next and last chapter will round off the discussion by highlighting the research questions and the earlier discussion in the study.

6 Inclusion of IDPs in Colombian public schools

This chapter highlights and concretize the study's research questions, sums up the main considerations of the former discussion, and aims to provide an understanding of how internally displaced children are included in the public education system. There is not a single clear and tantamount answer to this issue. The chapter is divided into sections dealing with the concepts of discrimination and acceptance, social systems of inclusion, and forms of equality. In the table below the categories that emerged through the data analysis and the concepts that have been useful to understand them are outlined. They are introduced here as a mean to sum up and provide an overview of how the data are categorized and how they fit into the theoretical concepts as presented in chapter four.

Figure 6.1 *Emerging categories from the cross-case empirical evidence*



To the left the phenomena of the study are listed, followed by the methods used to investigate them. Six main categories based on the data from the fieldwork is underlined with fat founts; discrimination, acceptance, family, teachers, peers, coping strategies, neoliberalism, and EFL. The main theoretical concepts that proved to be useful to analyze the data extracted by the

experiences of the IDPs in the two public schools are to the left of this column. The arrows show the most emergent relations between the phenomena, methods, theoretical concepts, and the categories.

6.1.1 How do internally displaced children experience the public Colombian educational system?

A clear negative tendency after enrolment and arrival to the school was apparent at the case school in the Suba district; namely the strong sense of discrimination. The students experienced rejection and harassment after enrolment, and these tendencies happened more frequently in the case of Suba than in the case of Usme. Subsequently, many students felt insecure in social situations after arrival at the schools. As a manner of avoiding discrimination, several students created cover stories, as well as they passed; a strategy often used when the stigmatized do not want anyone else to know about their stigma (Goffman, 1963). Whilst the school in Suba kept the enrolment and arrivals of IDP children as a secret, it was, on the other hand, a “practice of telling” at the other school, initiated by the teachers. However this did not result in more confident IDP students and did not lead to a fruitful inclusion process neither, taken the IDP students’ experiences into consideration. For instance, Gideon thought he was received well, but when the teacher said that all displaced persons would raise their hands, he experienced that the other students looked strange at him and stayed away (Interview: Gideon, Usme, 11/06/09).

Such a different practice can be attributed to the fact that the IDP students were a minority at the school in Suba, whilst they constituted the majority at the school in Usme; thus defining what social identity that was to be considered normal. However, the feeling of welcome became more and more apparent among the students as the time passed and the initial incidents of stigmatization decreased in frequency. The findings are also in line with Machel’s (1996) conclusions on schooling for refugees, claiming that there should be implemented strategies to lessen harassment in order to contribute to a favourable adaptation for children who enrol public schools after being displaced (Machel, 1996).

The stereotype connected to the identity of being *desplazada* was linked to negative associations by other non-IDP students. Irrespective of a displaced person’s real qualities behind the stigma of displacement attached to him, the categorization carried negative social impacts; for instance discrimination among peers. Being a former displaced person consists of

the stereotype attached by other people to this incident. Quite a lot of the IDP students believed that other students considered them as having lower abilities than the other students, as being violent by nature, aggressive, and so forth. There is no evidence, however, to believe that these are true stereotypes, but rather constructed images of “the other”. Such constructions are often results of labelling of the stigmatized groups the individuals are a part of (Link & Phelan, 2001). The experiences of the IDP students at the school in Usme did not entail any clear patterns of stigma during the initial period after enrolment; however, there are clear tendencies of a perception of vulnerability as the inclusion process proceeds. Clear patterns of stigmatization that were found at Suba, are not found to the same degree at Usme.

Contrary to the students in Suba who tried to forget about their identity or keep their social identity as IDPs as a secret by passing (Goffman, 1963), the students in Usme had both voluntarily and involuntarily revealed their social identity. The latter form of telling led to a distance to the rest of the students right after disclosure, and was initiated by the teachers. The voluntarily way did not contain any particular insecurity by the students, and there were no doubts about their personal identity without the need of constantly passing (Goffman, 1963).

At the school in Usme, the first period was difficult for the IDP students in terms of not knowing anyone and insecurity associated with vouchers to get a formal admittance as a student in the school. But at once they had been enrolled as students, a different picture is revealed in comparison to the case of Suba. A clear finding in the latter case was the apprehension to tell anyone that they had been forced to displacement from “el campo”. The major reason why such fear appeared was that if anyone knew, they would be bullied or harassed by their class mates. Contrary to the case in Suba, the Usme students had distinct experiences in terms of fear of harassment; the fear of this was almost absent.

Moreover, the positive attitude of revealing the past was rare at Suba, where the reluctance of revealing the past was much higher than that of some students at Usme. Thus, it was a clear tendency of a different level of benevolence of revealing their social identity as former IDPs. Considering how openness about one’s stigma appears, it may be reasonable to attribute this difference respectively to the IDP students’ presence as the minority and the majority. The stigma associated in the minority school of Suba was not present in the same way; they tried to hide their social identity because they were part of a minority group of IDPs, while the children in Usme constituted the majority of the total number of students and did not run the same risk of a revealing of the past. In short, a pattern of keeping the IDP status as a stigma

secretly is typical in the case of Suba, while acceptance of companions is to a great extent the norm at Usme. As we understand the data in the light of Goffman (1963) of how stigma appears in respectively minority and majority populations, the table will be as following:

Figure 6.2 *Perceived stigmatization in the two cases*

Category	IDPs in proportion of the total student population	Theoretical category	Internal displacement as a perceived stigma
School case			
Suba	Minority	Discrimination	Yes
Usme	Majority	Acceptance	No

The figure shows that discrimination appeared at the school where the IDPs formed a majority. This is also in line with Link and Phelan (2001) description of why stigmatization emerges; namely when power relations are clear and the stigmatized individuals or groups do not share this power.

The continuation

The major reinforcing factor was the significance of a supportive mother, aunt, and siblings in the home setting, whilst socialization with peers and meaningful relationships with teachers were other reinforcing factors at the micro system level, as Bronfenbrenner outlines it in the ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986; 1994). These relationships were clear and formed a similar pattern at both school cases. The activities at the micro and macro-level have specifically been useful to understand the experiences of the IDP students, whereas the most powerful reinforcing factors lays within the child-mother relationship. Most students regarded their mother to be strength in their daily life, and some research participants did also feel that she was the main reason of their continuation of the schooling. Those research participants who had lost their mother because of The Violence, told about close and supportive relationships with other members of the immediate family, such as aunts and siblings. These had also become crucial for their continuation at their educational process. Teachers did also play an important role for both the well-fare and the scholarly development of the IDP students, and the quality of teaching seemed to be thorough and both quantitative and qualitative satisfying, according to the students' views. An exception of quality in teaching was in regard to English as a Foreign Language. All IDP students disregarded the

way they learned it and the applicability of the language. The negativity towards EFL made the students unconcentrated and less motivated, to mention some of their unison experiences.

6.1.2 What factors are strengthening and what factors are weakening the inclusion process for internally displaced children at the schools?

The experiences of the IDP students reflects an array of both positive and negative factors around them, which were shown in the previous discussion. The mapping of strengthening and weakening factors shows how the inclusion process emerges as the time after enrolment goes forward. To sum up, we can extract the following simplified figure to explain the processes of inclusion, included aspects that either strengthen or weakens the process IDP students go through after enrolment. The process is illustrated by different points along a certain time of period of schooling.

Figure 6.3 Weakening and strengthening factors in the inclusion process for IDPs

Points of strengthening or weakening the right to education	Arrival after displacement		Continuation in schooling	Curricular challenges
School	Suba	Usme	Suba and Usme	Suba and Usme
Activities	Stigmatization: Discrimination from the regular students	Acceptance: Inclusion from the regular students	Adaptation: Social support by mothers, teachers, and peers	Inequality of survival/output: English as an irrelevant subject

Discrimination – a weakening factor

According to Goffman (1963), three different stigma categories can be found. The findings have shown that the last category, ethnocultural stigmas, is suitable to children who experienced discrimination. The arrival after enrolment entailed a presumed instability by the IDP students, though more evident at the school in Suba. There were also some problems at the school in Usme as well, but not at the same degree as was found at the school in Usme. At the latter school, the IDP students tended to experience more discrimination by the peers because of the stigma attached to their social identity, i.e being displaced from the rural districts of Colombia. Goffman explains such a situation as common when people meet other people in new social situations where the former identity is considered strange and deviating

(1963). The IDP students feel stigmatized within the majority of urban students. On the other hand, students at Usme expressed far more acceptance at the school as well as positive attitudes towards them as newly arriving students. Here it must be noted that they ran a risk of rejection if the teachers initiated disclosure of their social identity, for instance by separating them into own classes for displaced children. On the other hand, the IDP students who voluntarily controlled the information about themselves and was openly communicating their social identity seemed to avoid negative attention related to their stigma. When we bear in mind that the school in Usme had a student population where the IDP students as a group constituted the majority of the students, instead of a minority, it can be reasonable to conclude that the other “normal” students did not associate their IDP status as a deviating social identity. As a result, they did not experience the same level of discrimination as did the IDP students at the school in Suba.

The schools I used as cases differed in IDP students perceptions of how they were treated and included. The findings from the school north of Bogotá showed that revealing their status as former IDPs was associated with fear and thus it was kept as a secret; they did not want anyone to know their past. Especially right after enrolment and a period onward, the Suba students experienced various forms of rejection by their peers. On the other hand, Usme students felt more included from the very beginning, and did not look at their social status as stigmatizing as did the students in Suba. This maybe be attributed to the fact that the IDP students at the school in Usme were a part of the majority of the total student population; most of the students had been in the situation of coming from a rural district and been forced to move into Bogotá themselves.

The analysis has shown that particularly acts of passing as suggested by Goffman are common among the IDP students in both schools in Suba and in Usme districts of Bogotá. In addition, the analysis shows that all components pointed out by Link & Phelan (2001) appear in the research participants’ school context, thus justifying the use of the concept. But as they suggest, the various elements can be strong or weak, depending on the context.

Discrimination, labelling, stereotyping and status loss have been most evident based on the findings.

Personal coping strategies – strengthening factors

Positive relationships with caring adults such as a mother or an aunt is also considered a crucial factor for children to overcome trauma (Osofsky, 1999), thus positive relationships with family members are interrelated with the extent of coping strategies the children showed earlier in the discussion. Coping strategies can be said to contribute to a better adaptation process for IDPs in the schools used as cases. However, we cannot know the effect of the development of resilience for sure, but their stories about how they have dealt with their situation with singing, writing, and reading, indicate that some of the mentioned IDP students are in processes of developing resilience (Aguilar & Retamal, 2009). Together with strong relationships with their mother, aunt, and even siblings, the data has revealed a handful of strengthening factors that can be said to reinforce the equality of survival in the educational system after being displaced.

The mother and immediate family members - strengthening factors

IDP children from both school cases valued their mother, aunt, and siblings as the most important in their ability to ‘seguir adelante’. The mother as a supportive relation at the home setting is clear in my findings, and one can suggest that the significance of the mother is vital to both the continuation of the studies, motivation for higher education, and as important to independency. Moreover, the data analysis showed that the relationship, or “primary dyads” with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) terminology, served as a considerably strengthening factor for their adaptation at the schools. This may also have contributed to a better inclusion because the IDP students felt more comfortable as they experienced this support. Bronfenbrenner confirms the importance of such relationship between children and their mothers, and argues that “the capacity of such dyads serve as an effective context for human development” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 5).

Teachers and peers – strengthening factors

The IDP students’ teachers and peers were important for their well-being. After a cautious arrival for some, and a more openly for other students, relationships were established with their peers and became important for the daily life at the schools. Encouraging teachers were also a clear strengthening factor, whereby the IDP students could get more confidence and trust to their own abilities.

English as a Foreign Language – a weakening factor

The national education policy through the RE (2002) aim at making the education system and the competitive in order to follow up demands at the global level. One of the curricular outcomes is the MEN's area of commitment to English as an important subject. The students did not consider the subject to be of particular importance, nor did they report any valuing of the subject. In contrast to Mathematics, for instance, no one seemed to be fond of English as a second language in the curriculum. Quite the reverse, the antagonism of English as a useful subject was expressed many times by IDP students in both schools used as cases. They referred to difficulties because of oral repetition and a minimum of understanding of the language. If the subject would be perceived more useful for the IDP students, the quality of teaching English as a Foreign language must increase. As far as the data from the two school cases tells us, the quality of this subject is markedly low today. Thus, one can suggest that the use of EFL contributes to an irrelevant content of education for IDPs, and indirectly weakens the equality of both output and survival for the IDP students (Farrell, 1992). At the same time as EFL to a high extent was considered meaningless and irrelevant by the IDP students, we have to note that based on this study's data material, we can not conclude whether the EFL subject is an equivalent weakening factor for the other students as well, simply because noone of them were interviewed. But still it is possible to imply that for these individuals at these schools, the challenges towards the EFL are present, regardless of what comparative data with the other non-IDPs would tell.

Since a rights-based perspective in educational research advocates that the responsibility to ensure equality in education for children lies within the educational authorities, the responsibility of MEN should also be addressed to make the necessary policy changes and the belonging implementations to make the EFL subject more sustainable for learning. It is hard to argue that the use of EFL as it functions at the two schools used as cases, contributes to either "persistency in the educational system" (NCPC; Article 67) or equality of output (Farrell, 1992). A greater effort in overcoming the learning obstacles of the EFL as a subject, will likely meet the pronounced challenges of survival in the educational system as stated in the NCPC (Article 67). This guarantee however, is doubted considered fulfilled when we look at the challenges IDP children face in the public education system, especially when it comes to discrimination and relevant and irrelevant teaching methodologies. A common goal of meeting global demands is hard to argue as long as many students do not understand the meaning of learning the content which is decided to reach these goals. Hence, a

reconsideration of both content and aims should be consolidated by the MEN and also by the local school authorities as far as their mandate reach in changing curricular content.

6.1.3 How does national educational policy express education for IDPs?

This research question has partly been answered by analyzing the English as a Foreign Language in the light of the current educational policy as expressed in Revolución Educativa, and I will not go much further on this question here since it is already considered above. In short, the education policy expressed by the RE reflects a discourse that highlights the importance of competitive skills of communication technology and international languages, whereby English is seen as an important foreign language. It is hard to argue that the valuing of such competitive skills of English is helping the academically development of the IDP students as long as the understanding of the subject is considered so low as it is at the schools today. It might be useful, however, to ask what rationale has the use of English in the curriculum without providing reinforcement in terms of access to language outside of the classroom and by not providing the teachers with the necessary resources to carry out the subject? Efforts to reinforce the acquisition of language skills for both teachers and students would be more easily to justify in terms of quality.

6.2 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the research questions in the light of the data, and has outlined how internally displaced children are included in the Colombian educational system by giving an overview of what happens after arrival and what happens as they continue at the schools. The second research question summarized strengthening and weakening factors for the inclusion process at the schools. Finally, national educational policy has been summarized in relation to explore how it expresses education for IDPs in the public schools, whereby the focus has been on the subject of English as a Foreign Language. Forthcoming, the thesis is brought to an end, and will shortly present ending conclusions, as well as proposing a few considerations regarded as important based on the results, analysis and discussion.

7 Conclusions

The study has outlined and explored how internally displaced children in two public district schools in Colombia are included in the education system. The data has been analyzed in the light of stigma theory and an ecological system's theory including discussions at both micro and macro levels, whereby both strengthening and weakening factors towards an inclusive process into the schools after the displacement were revealed. The study has contributed to a research gap in the area of IDPs enrolled in public schools in a war-affected country as Colombia, and has elucidated processes which take place at schools where IDPs are both a minority and a majority. At Suba, disclosure was not actively done by neither teachers nor by the IDP students themselves, and they remained to hide their social identity as internally displaced persons by taking in use passing strategies (Goffman, 1963). In contrast, at the school in Usme, a "practice of openness" initiated by the teachers did not seem to be favourable for the IDP students. In Usme, where such practice was done, the research participants felt alienated, thus the practice seemed to do more harm than good. Such a practice was most obvious by the use of separation into an own class for those who had been displaced, a practice who lay the foundation of discrimination when carried out (Link & Phelan, 2001). The fighting of discrimination attributed to being desplazada in public rural schools might be enhanced if the teachers do not separate the IDP students into own classrooms. On the other hand, when IDP students themselves actively disclose their social identity as former displaced children, they feel more comfortable with the situation at school. Thus, if the process of disclosure of one's social identity is initiated by the IDP students themselves, they have a chance to control the situation and avoid unexpectedly rejection because of existing stereotypes among the 'normal' students. The balance and interrelations between the mother at home, the teachers and the peers at school, or the ecology in Bronfenbrenner's term (1979), seemed to be of a high importance in order to survive different stages as a student in the two schools which have been investigated. Together with personal coping strategies such as writing and reading, the internally displaced children seemed to manage good in spite of the abrupting incident after displacement and the initiating of a new life at a new school. The processes that they have gone through and the answers the internally displaced children shared have shown that supportive social network is a shared important aspect of continue at the educational system after being displaced.

7.1.1 Limitations

The study has explored strengths and weaknesses of the inclusion process with IDPs in general, thus, the findings are limited to draw conclusions on specific ethnocultural groups such as indigenous students and afro-descendants. The time scope of the study have not developed specific measures in order to differentiate these groups' inclusion processes, but rather having compared the IDP students as a homogeneous group. The latter point can, indeed, be a limitation for further planning and implementation of relevant practices for IDPs in public schools. Still, it is believed that the data has revealed tendencies in the inclusion process which reveal a few points that are representative for all ethnocultural groups in the cases and in other urban schools as well.

7.1.2 Recommendations for further research

Further research on the issue of inclusion for internally displaced children in public education systems in war-affected areas is suggested to be:

- ✓ How other IDP children in other contexts feel included in public educational systems
- ✓ Longitudinal studies who follow up IDPs within public schools which can dig deeper into what social mechanisms that make the students continue at the schools
- ✓ Comparative studies between IDP students and other students to see what measures that should be carried out to further strengthen the equality of survival in the educational system
- ✓ How mothers and immediate family members ensure survival in public schooling for IDPs
- ✓ Comparisons of teaching methodology in urban and rural educational institutions
- ✓ Consequences of policies on competitiveness in the educational sector and the quality of these reforms

7.1.3 Recommendations for further educational development at the schools in Suba and Usme

- ✓ Student-initiated disclosure about their background as internally displaced children because they feel more comfortable about controlling the situation and it does also prevent the provision of a breeding ground for stereotyping and rejection
- ✓ Pro-active initiatives to assure mother-student-teacher cooperation because building on the strong existing relationships between the children and their mothers, the equality of survival in the educational system can increase as the family-school relationships would become reciprocal to the advantage for the IDP children. Consequently, the effects may lead to a higher extent of social and emotional well-being, a better managing of subjects, and contributing to a more smooth inclusion process after incidents of displacement
- ✓ Reconsideration of the content of EFL because the current content, teaching methodology and valuing of the language is alarmingly low. A betterment or change of the subject is necessary to justify the aim of EFL to meet the global demands the MEN has put forth in the RE. Based on the IDP students' experiences, the government can adjust both English as a subject in the curriculum, as well as improvement of the teacher's language skills
- ✓ Continuation of ensuring what is constructive in the subject of Mathematics because it seemed to function well based on the experiences of the IDP students, thus contributing to increased perception of management of the curricular content, and consequently to an enhanced equality of survival in the educational system because the educational quality increases

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Appendices

A. Interview Guide for Students – Spanish

Introducción

- ✓ Explicar el propósito de la entrevista
- ✓ Asegurarse que sepan la protección de identidad, confidencialidad, que nadie va a ser reconocido en el proceso de la entrevista, ni ahora ni después.

Nombre:

Edad:

Grado:

Lugar de origen:

A. Inclusión

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas estudiando en este colegio?
2. ¿Antes de estudiar en este colegio recibías alguna forma de educación?
3. ¿Cómo te recibieron cuando llegaste en este colegio?
4. ¿Cuéntame una cosa que ha sido fácil en el colegio? ¿Fácil en cuanto que?
5. ¿Cuéntame una cosa que ha sido difícil en el colegio? ¿Difícil en cuanto que?

B. Discriminación

6. ¿Te da miedo contarles a tus compañeros que has sido desplazado?
7. ¿Has sentido que te han rechazado a tus profesores o compañeros? (¿En qué situaciones?)

C. Acceso

8. ¿Cuéntame como fue empezar en este colegio después de haber sido desplazado?
9. ¿Qué personas piensas han sido valiosas para tu logro de tener acceso a este colegio?

D. Contenido

10. ¿Cuál materia te parece más fácil?, ¿por qué?
11. ¿Cuál materia te parece más difícil?, ¿por qué?
12. ¿Cómo te parece la forma tu profesor/a explica?
13. ¿Enseñaban las mismas materias de donde vienes? ¿Eran diferente?

E. Bienestar psicosocial

14. ¿Cuéntame como te sientes de estar en este colegio?
15. ¿Cómo te sientes con tus profesores?, ¿por qué?
16. ¿Te cuesta concentrarte algunas veces durante las clases?
17. ¿Estás haciendo algo para desahogarte de pensamientos del pasado?

F. Futuro

18. ¿Qué quieres hacer cuando seas más grande? ¿Cuéntame porque?
19. ¿Cuándo ves atrás, cuáles han sido las experiencias más importantes después de haber sido desplazado?
20. ¿Si tuvieras la oportunidad de dar algún consejo a otros niños desplazados, que les dirías?

G. Al final (después de la conversación)

- ¿Quieres escuchar lo que está grabado?
- ¿Hay algo que quieres que borre?
- ¿Hay algo que debería preguntar a otros estudiantes que han sido desplazados?
- ¿Hay preguntas que no debería preguntar en el futuro a otros estudiantes?

B. List of Informants

Interviews with IDP children from the school in Suba District (Pseudonyms)

1. Abigail – 13 years, 5 grade, primary school
2. Renée – 11 years, 5 grade, primary school
3. Cameron – 13 years, 9 grade, secondary school
4. Kaia – 19 years, 11 grade, secondary school
5. Naomi – 12 years, 7 grade, secondary school
6. Calvin – 9 years, 4 grade, primary school
7. Isla – 16 years – 10 grade, secondary school
8. Danny – 16 years, 19 grade, secondary school
9. Esperanza – 12 years, 6 grade, primary school

Interviews with IDP children from the school in Usme District (Pseudonyms)

10. Isaiah – 12 years, 4 grade, primary school
11. Jacob – 12 years, primary school
12. Kaelyn – 11 years, 5 grade, primary school
13. Gabriella – 13 years, 5 grade, primary school
14. Macy – 14 years, 5 grade, primary school
15. Gideon – 12 years, 5 grade, primary school

C.Research Letter



UNIVERSITETET I OSLO
DET UTDANNINGSVITENSKAPELIGE FAKULTET

To whom it may concern

Institute for Educational Research
P.O. Box 1092 Blindern
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Date: 2009-08-03

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ASSISTANCE IN THE CONDUCTION OF FIELD-WORK

This is to confirm that the Norwegian student, Knut Iversen, born 17.12.1981, is a second year student in the Master programme in Comparative and International Education at the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Oslo, Norway.

In the second year our students are required to write a Master thesis of 80 to 110 pages. This thesis should preferably be based on field studies conducted in countries outside of Norway. The field-work may incorporate interviews with educational practitioners and decision-makers, class-room observation and documentary analysis. The type of data gathered should of course be discussed with the relevant authorities. It is our hope that the work produced by the student will not only benefit him in his academic career but also be of use in the future.

Knut Iversen will be conducting his field work in Colombia between the months of September and November 2009. We kindly ask you to give him all possible assistance during her field-work in Colombia.

Yours sincerely,

Kristi Barcus
Senior Executive Officer



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